EMIL LUDWIG

ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES

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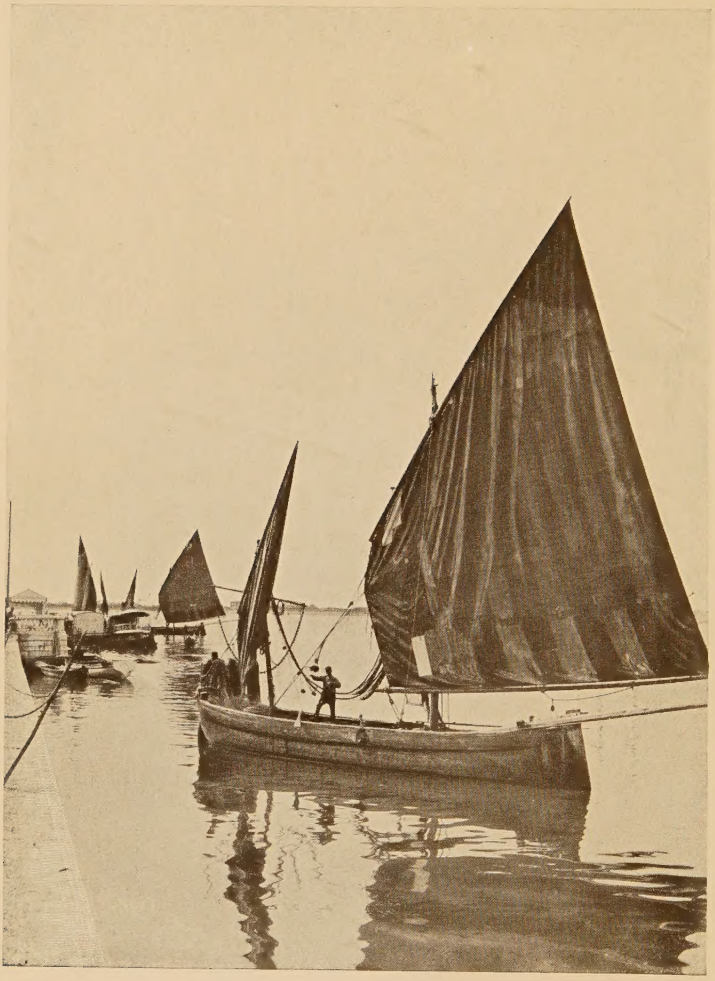
ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES



CHIOGGIA FISHING-SMACKS

EMIL LUDWIG

ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES

Translated from the German by
EDEN *and* CEDAR PAUL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν
καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν

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GENOA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

GENOA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

At length we have put the land behind us! How full it was of things, how beset with noise! No more than a quarter of an hour on shipboard, even though the ship be but a floating hotel such as this, and we find it hard to understand how eyes, nose, and ears have been able to endure a landsman's life so long.

Does a ship "put to sea"? Should we not say, rather, that it "cuts its way into the sea"? I stand in the bow, looking ahead, for the coming minute always lures me more than the minute that is past. The gentle breeze of this spring evening blows fresh upon my eyes, and stirs my hair. I gaze forward into the grey-blue distance. Yet there is something that plucks at my shoulders; is it curiosity, a feeling of release, or a sense of leave-taking? For good or for ill, I must turn round, must glance back, must take one more look at that which I am leaving so blithely.

The town clings to a steep declivity, is wedged into a cleft in the hillside, amazingly small, alarmingly confined. "Why here?" is the question a stranger cannot fail to ask himself; for even the roadstead, though well protected, is small, and cannot give harbourage to all the ships that seek an entry. Through lack of space, the streets are so narrow that even in the main thorough-

fare the palaces of the nobles frown at one another across a space of less than twenty feet; and for the same reason the face which these Genoese show to a stranger is a grave one, coolly scrutinising, almost unkindly. It is the expression of men who have to be ever on guard because they live on a mere strip of coast, beneath a threatening mountain; that of seafarers who made their wealth of old as intrepid pirates, and gain their livelihood to-day by skilful trade with far-off lands. The stream of life in the hearts of these burghers is an underground current that rushes on its way in darkness — heavy and sombre as the vowels in the lovely name of their town.

Genoa has the finest Van Dycks and the best bake-houses; both are imports. Of native growth are the huge juicy apples; so are the pictures of Bernardo Castello and Pellegrino Piola, the melancholic seventeenth-century painters. The Civita Superba is like one of those tall, dark women upon whose faces we can read the history of long-extinct passion as clearly as if all had happened yesterday. On the visage of Genoa are graven, for every stranger to read, the signs of an adventurous past and a cautious present. These coexist with patrician wealth on the one hand, and on the other with the savage poverty of a seaport — the poverty of those whose noisy life can best be studied after nightfall in the lower quarters of the town.

It is true that no such contrasts are flaunted in the stately museums, wherein Genoa displays the glories of her heroic past. In these records, the slavery upon which her greatness was founded is decently hidden

out of sight. Here we see costly models of the famous ships in which dauntless captains sailed forth to win gold, to take cities and women by storm. Allegorical paintings show us the armadas of popes and emperors bombarding one another in the Gulf of Genoa. The coming of the French fleet, the landing of the Austrians, the deeds of Admiral Doria and those of Ambrogio di Spinola, the charters of Napoleon, the thousand who marched with Garibaldi — all are paraded with the jealous pride of republicans accustomed to self-government. Freedom was the rock on which alone this sedate city by the sea could be upbuilded. No other place in Italy has so independent a rhythm: no other cherishes its revolutionary past so fervently. Not by chance was Mazzini born here.

The human countenances, the silent faces, on house-fronts and over gateways, on the coats-of-arms and the decorations and the statues of to-day and of days gone by, which unite to convey a general impression to the stranger, are reflected likewise by this rocky gloom, by this silent and alert generation of the Genoese.

None but a stranger could give lightness to so much solid weight; only one from afar could show with his delicate implement that here also hearts were palpitating, that here also the little amourettes of a multi-coloured life prattled amid the splendours of graver happenings. For when we make our way out of the distinguished boredom of the Palazzo Reale, out of the chill ponderousness of San Giorgio, into one of those tall mansions of the nobility which cut heaven's light from the main street, we suddenly see familiar heads upon the

walls. Van Dyck was at work with his brush here. These wealthy patricians had summoned from England the most fashionable painter of their time, had heaped gold and distinctions and the favour of women upon him, commissioning him to make them immortal. Now there hangs amid the pathetic splendours of this palace the coldly seductive Paolina Brignole-Sale. Scarcely less beautiful than her sister, by Van Dyck's grace, the Marchesa Spinola, she has for three centuries been stretching forth her ruthless but lovely hands from stiff black cuffs. Opposite her, on horseback, is her dandy of a husband, sometime head of the house; and he would seem to have been of a sufficiently amorous disposition to give her good warrant for the sin she unquestionably committed with the brutal yet effeminate young count whose picture hangs in the next room.

The palace has now become a bank. Whereas three hundred years ago its lord thrived upon affairs whose threads were hidden away within its walls, to-day a nameless bank manager gathers the threads of his business publicly enough into the same room, and only keeps private the life he lives in his modern villa at Nervi.

On the front of a simple-looking mansion we see an ornate tablet in memory of Columbus, who was likewise with good reason born in Genoa. All the petty coastal towns of the Italian Riviera sport busts of the famous navigator, and there is none finer than that of Santa Margherita, whose legend declares that it is "dedicated to our great fellow-citizen, safely returned from America." For this man was a human embodiment of Genoa's destiny — to sail far across the ocean, and come

back laden with treasure. We may read here a letter penned by Columbus, in a handwriting which is a cross between an artist's rough-hewn script and a merchant's copper-plate. It tells us how he has handed over a tithe of his revenues to the Bank of San Giorgio, a son paying tribute to his fathers. Only the inscription beneath the oddly-shaped urn which was to receive his ashes, shows (with its Spanish lettering) that betwixt morn and eve the son and his native city had become estranged from one another, in the days when he sailed the ocean on whose finest inland waters I am now cruising.

He only who knows many seas, begins to know the ocean. In this case, as when we study mankind, it is solely by comparison that we can form a general picture. At first, one sea looks to us just like another, as do negroes, or the goats in a herd. Soon, however, we learn to know them apart; we distinguish between the appassionato of the Atlantic, the scintillating dreaminess of the Indian Ocean, the brooding secrecy of the East African Sea, and the unpeopled haze of the Pacific.

But of all the bights and indentations, the Mediterranean has the most amazing individuality. Is it, properly speaking, a sea at all, when only by two narrow channels, at Gibraltar and at Suez, can it mingle its waters with those of its great mother, the ocean; and only through a third confined passage, the Dardanelles, can it nourish its own offspring? Till seventy years ago, there was but the one entry between the Pillars of Hercules. Had any chosen to build a dam across this strait, he would have transformed the Midland Sea into a poor pond with no outlet, even as a few warships can to-day transform it.

At once bond and free, connected only by frail links with the great waters of the world, it is for ever a dependency, a sea and yet no sea. Thus it has become the most feminine of them all. It has caprices and storms, longings and spites, seductions and undercurrents and fantasies, even as a woman. It differs wherever we go. The Ligurian Sea, broad and clear, on which I am now sailing, has but a distant kinship with its sister, the brilliant and treacherous Adriatic.

Always the Mediterranean is debonair and cheerful. It bears no grudges, and forgets its caprices in a night. This mutability, this mobility, this allegro in its nature, it imparts to the coasts which environ it, and to the peoples who dwell thereon.

That is why they are lovable.

CAPRI

A SERRATED steep, a beetling front, seemingly with two dimensions only, affrights the seafarer approaching Capri. The place looks as if it could be nothing more than a rock rising out of the sea. Devil's Island in distant prospect is not more threatening.

When, strangers newly come, we tread its surface, it tricks us as great men do; it has a welcoming smile which hides a lonely aloofness; ostensibly, it opens itself for peregrination with the aid of a few lightly made roadways, only to check advance by insuperable abysses. Blossoming luxuriantly on the surface, its roots have been undermined in its eternal warfare with the elements. The day is made tuneful with mandolin and song; but the silence of the night has as accompaniment the unceasing roar of the sea. No other shore on the Mediterranean is more frequented by the Germans, no other has been more often painted; and yet it is really known to very few. It has "first-class hotels" (the Quisipaga! for instance) built on second-class sites. Since the traveller is inclined to shun both the savagery of the ravines and the dreariness of an unrelieved expanse of sea, the favourite situation for these caravanserais is where the visitor can gaze his fill at the semicircle of the Bay of Naples — a fine expanse, though perhaps a trifle pretty-pretty.

It is to the south, however, where the seaward prospect

is unbroken, that we must go to find the mysteries and the charms of the island. Here the rock is crowned with a battlemented tower, fortified in the style of the Saracen towers that rear their heads along the coast of Salerno. Below it are terraces which succeed one another on the slope. In this little harbour dwells the spirit of Goat Island. Beneath the clean-washed limestone cliffs, from shore to horizon stretch waters of a limpid purity more wonderful than I have seen in any other part of the Mediterranean. Translucency and purity are the sign-manual of Capri in sea, sky, and stone. No more than about forty days in the year are cloudy. It is because of this radiant atmosphere, because the climate is so mild and the air so free from dust, that the flowers of the island have the brilliant colouring characteristic of a mountain flora.

There, where craggy rocks shelter the valleys from the sea breeze, grows in inaccessible situations a gentian-blue shrub, rather inconspicuous, low, and woody, with leaves like those of rosemary. Its flowers, about as large as lilac flowers, four-petalled, radiate their vivid blue into the world with all the energy of a vigorous human heart, giving the impression of patches of deep blue uprisen from the sea. Down the arid precipices, whose basic tint is pale green, come cascades, as it were, of vegetation; globular tufts of the dark-green and yellowish milkwort. Rosemary and barberry grow to an unwonted size. As for myrtle, this shrub is here as tall as a man, or taller; and its white blossoms diffuse a bitter-sweet scent, as if in warning to brides. From the sun-kissed cliffs hangs a giant variety of henbane,

ON CAPRI

adorned with yellow and lilac flowers, blazing with colour, each as large as the palm of the hand. Ox-eyed daisies, broom, and purple heather, thrust up to the sun with tropical luxuriance, are almost tree-like in their development, so that they are actually taller than the juniper-trees, which lean away from the prevailing wind, and bow down earthward, to escape being broken by its force. Interspersed with these are purple anemones, blooming tranquilly as if trimly bedded in a German garden, side by side with thyme, shaded by extravagantly large bushes of wild fennel, or by proud and slender pink lilies.

Krupp, of Essen fame, had had a considerable part of the southern coast of Capri transformed into a sort of landscape garden. To-day this rather too sumptuous pleasure-ground has become a splendid ruin. Where for a decade there has been no touch of a gardener's hand, the natural fertility of the island, aided by sunshine and sea air, has brought forth a crazy-quilt of bushes and creepers, mosses and cactuses, so that time, gentle and patient, has smoothed away the traces of man's interference.

Thence we scramble down the ravine, past a fine olive grove, to where our boat awaits us. We have the sail lowered, and are rowed along beneath the tall cliffs. The smacksman, who has rowed us here before (it was twenty years ago), is a handsome, strongly built man, still merry as a boy, though soon to be a grandfather. He knows the caves, understands and loves his native island. His name, which is not to be found in any guidebook, shall be given here, in a book which does not

aspire to be a Baedeker. He is Giro Albanese of Piccola Marina, and has the cleanest of clean rooms to let in his cottage by the sea. His lodgers are kept well supplied with lobsters and mussels, crabs and cuttle-fish. If you make a wry face at anything he brings you, he laughs, and says in the singsong Capri patois: "Tutto che viene dal mare è buono, tutto si può mangiare!"

Here on the southern coast, where the cliffs face the open sea, are the caves; for throughout the ages the waves have beaten more urgently against these rocky walls than on the north, where the island looks towards Naples. True, one of the largest and most famous of them, the Blue Grotto, opens into the Bay; but our modern colour sense differs much from that of our forefathers, and the beautiful milky blue of the light that shines here has ceased to exert its ancient charm.

Other colours give their names to other caves, so that we have the Green Grotto, the Red Grotto, and the White. Really they should be called Iris, for they are all of them Rainbow Caves. Only a skilled pilot, one to the manner born, can guide a boat through the narrow mouth of such a cavern, where the waves often break, and where sunken reefs have to be circumnavigated. Once inside, however, the spectator can enjoy a wealth of colour such as elsewhere can be matched only by the student of spectrum analysis. The colour effects in these caves can be explained in like manner by the refraction and reflexion of light by the waves, and by counter-reflexion from the rocky pinnacles. Whatever the cause, the result is magical, and would make a Whistler frenzied with delight.

On the cliffs, in the open, there is a riot of colour no less splendid that that of alpine flora. Beneath the rocks the colours are subdued. In these waters, where direct sunshine never finds its way, there is an eerie illumination, an opalescent sheen, caressing the eyes even of those who are venturesome enough to intrude wantonly into such hidden recesses.

PAESTUM

PAESTUM

In uninhabited spots dwell the gods alone. No mortal can live within range of Paestum. The peasant who tills the land nearby, drives or rides league upon league to his work, and returns at dusk to his cottage far inland. For many miles round the temple, there is not a roof to be seen, not a shelter in which a human being can close his eyes to sleep.

One man only, with his family, braves the night air of this desolate region. The windows of his cottage are shrouded with mosquito netting, to ward off a very real peril; even his youngest child has already the yellow tint of those who are ague-stricken. Why does the temple need a guardian? Is he posted there to see that no one carries off the stones? There is nothing else to steal; nothing but the pillars, which are as everlasting as the sea that lies at their feet. It is but a minor deity whom the poor fellow serves; the State, for which he gathers in a few lire, paid by visitors from afar.

Even four-footed beasts shun the place, though from time to time we may catch sight of the head and the great horns of a half-wild buffalo, barely projecting from the long herbage which flourishes in this inhospitable place — a level steppe stretching from the coast to the distant Apennines.

When the sun dips into the sea, the brownish-red columns that surround the altar of Poseidon take on a

ruddier glow. They make an impression disproportionate to their size, being the only prominent objects in a level landscape, and thus allegorically representing the gods. They seem to tower all the more because there is nothing ashore to contrast them with, and because seaward the horizon is the only thing to cut into their outlines.

Dark-blue and sombre is the sea at Paestum. More than once, it would seem, in ancient days, its waters have lapped the bases of the pillars, what time the Lord of the Seas was still alive. Then did the wavelets, the grandchildren of the watergod, lave his huge feet. Of old, the place was peopled, was lively, was full of the cheerful converse of landsmen and seafolk. One and all, they enjoyed the protection of Poseidon, whose spirit abode in the red-brown hall of the temple.

Now the roof has fallen in, the inhabitants have fled, the ploughlands are parched, the haven is silted up, and the only live creatures that abound are the dread insects that harbour in myriads amid the scorched grasses of summer. To us of a later day, no other vestige of the classic world seems so mournful as does this forsaken temple.

As we drive homeward, and the night falls almost as swiftly as of yore the roof of his temple tumbled in upon the seagod's head, suddenly the deserted countryside begins to hum with life. Tiny wings flutter in the lamplight; there is a swirling and a rustling; innumerable little bodies flip against our faces and vanish into the distance. These are the spirits of fever, and their airy dance is a dance of death.

Our trusty horses quicken their pace through the night.

PALERMO

Face d'Arriver — Corso — The Emperor's Tomb — An Ideal Room — Palatina — Chance Encounters — Monreale

PALERMO

Face d'Arriver

Nothing, perhaps, resembles hope more closely than does a sea-coast in the light of morning, when the ship draws near to it. Does it not promise more than the coast we left at eventide, when darkness was falling? Does it not promise more than it can ever perform?

Swiftly, as if winged by a vigorous will, the steamer makes its way towards Palermo. Our eyes range along the hazy outline of the mountains, which are striving to shake off the morning mist; and, as bay and cape, valley and steep, become gradually clear, we say in our hearts (buoyed up with hope): "Oh that it were possible never to land! To go on for ever speeding towards the glorious morning landscape hovering ahead there in the blue distance, magnificent with promise! Or could we but be transported to one of those old-fashioned sailing ships which are gliding over the waters in front of us, that we might move on sedately, farther and ever farther, masters and servants of the wind, looking contemptuously at the smoke-trail of the vessels which the thinking animal has invented that he may laugh at the wind."

Yet I love these white leviathans too, with their huge slanting fins; the great steamships which, when they are trembling under stress of their own tamed powers,

remind us so much of men in the presence of women. For a night she has sheltered us, this stout ship which has brought us away from Naples' hideous turmoil, its dirt and its deceptions, to a brighter and cleaner coast. Once again, after being prisoned for six years far inland, I hear the sea whispering its message of freedom outside the iron wall of my cabin; once more I watch the marvellous play of light and shade upon the under surface of the deck over my head. The only jarring element is the clamour of three hundred Neapolitan students, who tramp and stamp and shout above me, until, at length exhausted, they drop to sleep where they are standing. This alone has brought the vanities and follies of the mainland with us out to sea. Deaf to everything except the call of their own callow youth, they believe themselves to be giving proof of patriotism by brandishing their motley caps to ever-renewed shouts of "Aiaha!"

In the morning the horizon begins to swing round. The ship's head is being turned towards the south-west. Now a town rises into view, emerging from the haze — a town snugly ensconced between two capes. My first look is for the dome with the campanile, beneath which is the emperor's tomb. Almost twenty years ago, I had first visited this porphyry mausoleum. A colossal chimney intervenes and dispels all sentimental affection, as does the grotesque outline of the overrated Monte Pellegrino, which is wellnigh as disappointing as the other famous sights which for our grandfathers denoted Italy. (A change of the stars in Baedeker, as a sign of changing tastes! Old editions give us trustworthy guidance by affixing double asterisks to things

which weary us, whereas of new gods there is often no mention at all. This is not to impute a fault, for I lift my hat to friend Baedeker; it is but one of Time's revenges.)

On landing, there is a record in noise made by arriving and departing students, shouting from quay to ship-board and back again. This is reminiscent of negro dances on the Zambesi, which were, however, more rhythmical. The view from the deck — flags, nose-gays, young men waving their caps — revives one's sense of bewilderment that kings not only endured this sort of thing for thirty years, but could seek its perpetual renewal. I toy with thoughts concerning guilds, associations, and other matters sociological, which, even if they do not, as do these young nationalists, glorify decayed ideals, cannot fail, by grouping people in herds, to deaden the soul. (Still, the universal levelling must be accepted as inevitable.)

Astern of us, yesterday is at war with to-morrow. An elegant yacht is berthed there; white, proud, flaunting her beauty in the morning light. Uninhabited, it would seem; no one sleeping aboard, for dainty ears could not bear the din of a busy port. Close at hand, a collier is being unloaded. Athwart the deck of the trim yacht, I catch a glimpse of the muscular back of a docker wearing blue jeans. He makes rhythmical movements, like those of a dancing bear, as he receives and hands up basket after basket filled with coal, loading a lighter. This coal is to be transferred to the yacht's bunkers, and will enable the lords of life and their ladies to flutter elsewhere on their butterfly course.

Ladies there must be; the graceful deck-chairs are evidence of this.

'Tis a pity. It was more agreeable when rich idlers could cruise in the Mediterranean without any need for a man in coal-grimed garments to make movements like an automaton's for six long hours in order that they might subsequently enjoy themselves in their pleasure boat.

Nowadays, there is no escape from that grim necessity.

Corso

I should call this a Spanish town; sometimes, an Arabian; seldom an Italian. The Palermese feel this themselves, and that is why the Sicilians want home rule. When we revisit Palermo after a stay in Rome, we understand why the Roman wishes to maintain his grip on a place to which he never goes; but also why the island, whose products go all over Europe, wants to have no truck with Rome. For Palermo la Felice, prouder and handsomer than Naples, high-stepping and bold, but brighter than Genoa, a city of many gardens, but cleaner than Florence, cannot consent to become a mere phantasm, like Venice. No other Italian town troubles itself so little about foreigners, who are here neither spoiled nor despoiled.

The Palermese are one-fourth Spaniards, one-fourth Saracens, one-fourth Arabs, and only one-fourth Italians — to say nothing of the percentage admixture of these strains in the interesting compost which is an individual Sicilian.

They are proud. Inasmuch as they produce great comedians, who take the leading places on the Italian

FROM SELINUNT

stage, they might also, one would think, produce street singers. But, since this is a despised occupation, the street singers of Palermo are imported from Naples. The natives of the city crowd in hundreds round the immigrant bajazzo, who stands on the top of his barrel-organ, braying forth couplets while his mate turns the handle. He is dressed up as a ladro, and has not been born into the rôle. When evening comes, he puts on fine clothes, and dines like the rich man in the movies — for the day in the Corso has filled his pockets. Nor do we find in Palermo that cabman or shoeblack haggles over the price of his services; he accepts whatever the hirer thinks fit to give.

Their type is provincial. Though the city has more than a quarter of a million inhabitants, every one of whom regards himself as the chief of a royal and independent Mediterranean island, the streets, the dress, the newspapers, and the soldiers produce the same sort of impression as in Florence. The Corso is more distinguished than that of Naples, more elegant than that of Rome. Every window has a Spanish balcony, but we rarely see a pretty woman on one of these. The interiors are dignified; double courts, into which the stranger can less readily see, and which he can less readily enter, than in Rome, though we are farther south. Fewer cafés, and fewer seats on the open front. When a resident receives a stranger, it is formally to begin with, though cordially after a while. (My thanks to Professor Cristadoro!)

Only in one respect are they more childlike. Sweets are on sale at every turn, always of the best quality;

and the men throng the sweetshops even more than in the East, flocking there as if cigarettes were in question. Whilst the general rule is for shops to open late and close early, these temples for sweet-toothed devotees have their shutters down for sixteen hours at a stretch.

Who says "Spanish," says "monarchist." In Rome, there are very few statues of reigning princes; and in the two mortuary churches there, the statues are those of popes. Except for the new white-and-gold monster, whose royal horse-tail beats the record of our imperial monuments, the only crowned magnate a-horseback in a Roman piazza is the bronze figure of that Cæsar who by mere chance found his way into the Capitol — the great pagan, Marcus Aurelius, being regarded as a Most Christian Constantine. In Palermo, on the other hand, in the very centre of the town, at the Quattro Canti where the Corsi intersect, four kings (punctuated by four seasons and four saints, and therefore fitly companioned) look proudly down.

A little higher up is another monarch's figure, standing and contemplating the hurly-burly. This splendid monument is almost unknown. No one remembers Livolsi, who cast it in 1630 or thereabouts, thus entering the fraternity of the great sculptors that lived a century and a half before him. The statue represents Charles V, in green bronze. It is small, but is as free in poise as an antique. The emperor stands unaffectedly, leaning lightly upon a walking-stick. The monument is a contrast to the modish statues of our German princes, who grace our streets in such attitudes as "befit a king" taught to play the part in the

grand style. Charles stands here like a man of the world; easy and self-confident. We see in him something far beyond a mere nonchalant aristocrat; we see a reactionary man of genius, the inheritor of two empires; we see Luther's great adversary.

Looking from this point up and down the Corso, we note that it is strangely closed in at either end: westward, towards the mountains, by a gate which is not a gate, for an uncouth mansion surmounts it; eastward, by a "porta" which is even less of a gate, for neither arches nor walls enclose it, and it is no more than the interval through which the street emerges between two daintily built houses. A narrow space, filled in by a surface of blue, contrasts with their grey. As we descend the Corso, as we draw near the "porta," the blue surface seems to sink lower and lower.

It is the sea.

The Emperor's Tomb

At the end of the town there is a great fane, and we seem to have been suddenly removed to Bamberg or to Canterbury, for we see pointed arches, flying buttresses, Norman towers. Walter of the Mill, an English archbishop, built it. Strange, indeed, has been the interplay between North and South, for whose purposes this island has been misused, and which has led in the end to the emergence of what the spirit of history had willed — a peculiar, a unique culture, the culture of Sicily.

In Germany, I should hardly ever think of visiting emperors' tombs; and in this matter Spires gives me

scant pleasure and little food for thought. But the farther I get from my homeland, the more do I find that such rarities allure me. The first thing I visit is the cathedral, a marvellous, unorganised immensity. May not we imagine that the seven sons of Tancred de Hauteville (or were there eight of them?), the first successful Normans in the South, had, on their quaint wooden ships, brought hither their longings in the form of these pointed arches? Entrancingly paradoxical to make such Sainte-Chapelle arches, such Rheims and Cologne pillars, rise towards the radiant sky that surmounts the Isle of Lemons, tranquilly self-contemplative, troubled by no efforts, and having no desires. A great allegory of the problem of North versus South as it shapes itself in the Teutonic mind.

A like allegory was the career of Frederick II. When the traveller enters this cold-looking interior, restored with limestone, memories of the emperor will direct his footsteps leftward, into the Hohenstaufen chapel. As a German pilgrim, I, too, went thither to pay my respects.

Frederick the Greatest's porphyry sarcophagus is the first we encounter. It was designed by himself, and is handsomer, riper, and richer than that of his grandfather, which stands behind it. Then comes the tomb of Henry VI and that of Constance of Aragon, Frederick's first wife. But our thoughts stay with the crusading emperor.

Surely a remarkable recurrence of the similar, that alike among the Hohenstaufen and the Hohenzollern there should have been only one man of genius, and that

in each case this man should have reigned as Frederick II. The emperor of that name was the handsomest and the bravest of all the German emperors; he was also the most modern, at once thinker, warrior, poet, philosopher, adventurer of the soul, and Antichrist; thrice married, and father of more than a score of illegitimate children whose mothers were born anywhere betwixt Flanders and Jerusalem — children who gloried in their origin. Astrologer, visionary, and investigator, epicure and cynic, whose real story is still unwritten; Leonardo of the Middle Ages, Goethe of the early thirteenth century; man to be called happy, since you drained life to the dregs without being made drunk thereby; great exemplar of Sicily, imperial spirit of the North forcing your way into the South, first European devoid of race prejudice; let the garland plaited by Germans of an age remote from yours be laid upon the porphyry steps of your last resting-place!

I step forth into the noonday sunshine, to find youngsters scuffling outside. The marble seat on the escarpment is warm from the sun's rays. Marble, warmed; such was a wish in Frederick's soul.

An allegory of Sicily.

An Ideal Room

Of the Normans in this part of the world we know little more than that they were the financiers of these undertakings, were capitalists or pirates who by turns supplied the necessary foundations of early civilisation, and thus worked miracles. Where did the distinguished admiral who built the "Marmorata" get the money

needed for his purpose? His architect, at any rate, achieved the squaring of the circle, erecting a dome upon the quadrangle formed by four pointed arches, and obliterating the sides between the arches by the construction of splendidly vague niches.

Roger, the second of that name, grandson of Tancred who slew his brother, like so many kings after Cain; this Norman who "freed" the island from the Saracens much as Victor Emmanuel freed the Botzen peasants, or as William II freed the Poles; Roger, whose wars no longer have the smallest interest for us, survives for posterity thanks to a chapel and a room. On their account, he may even be forgiven for having been a hero.

A sort of tower constitutes the central feature of the straggling edifice whose left wing is a Renaissance palace while its right wing is a baroque hall. First of all, the visitor has to plod his weary way through the usual show set of rooms, attended by the custodian, a royal servant who sighs because the castle is no longer royal and he does not know who will pay next week's wages — the king having donated this and a few other castles to "his people."

At length we come to Roger's room, lofty but not large, up in the tower, a perfect living-room of the South, ornate with marble and with gold mosaic, with nothing ecclesiastical about it, thoroughly secular, radiating cheerfulness and elegance. This was designed to be an airy room, one to live in pleasurably. As mural decorations, saints and ceremonial details would have been out of place. The "liberated" Arabs, there-

fore, who were pressed into the conqueror's service, and had to minister to his architectural caprices, bethought them of their Persian song-books. That is why leopards and peacocks, swans and centaurs, fountains and stars, and standard roses like those of Shiraz, were conjured up on these walls by patient oriental fingers. Looking at the adornments of the great room, at the deep bay window, at the built-in seats, at the small and lightsome dome — all of white marble and of yellow and of red — we are able in imagination to reconstruct the whole of Roger's castle, whereof nothing now remains but the tower, and of the tower nothing but the room in all its marble loveliness, cool yet jocund, matchless. Thus must the northerner live in the South if, in this conquered world of warmer enjoyments, he wishes to preserve the dignity, the frugality, and the restraint of the North.

Remarkable is the sense of incongruity when, wearing ridiculous slippers provided for the purpose at the entry, we shuffle through this room and across the parquet floor of the Spanish hall, what time the custodian, with the respectful familiarity of an old retainer, shows us the modern royal nuptial couch.

Palatina

Through the murk of a dimly lit chapel rise the supplications of morning mass. Tongues of yellow flame dance above the tall, white candles in front of the altar. The first general impression is the vague one of a gilded interior. Pillars and walls, chapels and bay, niches and steps, gleam obscurely. By slow degrees,

colours and forms emerge from the twilight of this palace chapel. I feel myself surrounded by legendary shapes, which resonate, so to say, against the gold background like the strains of a 'cello sonata. Nothing is white; nothing is mute; there is nothing to jar with the style of the whole.

For eight centuries this little wonder of the world has been kept intact by the good sense and good taste of wise guardians. I scarcely note the details of what is represented on the walls. Yet I see and I feel that in the mosaics there is a mingling of Old Testament history and New, and that even the grave figure of the Saviour in the apse has the dark hues of a Rembrandt. Porphyry rectangles and circles, with a half-polished surface, give splendid imitations of Persian carpets, which have, indeed, furnished the leading ideas for all the ornamentation and the multiplicity of arabesques.

For, with commendable patience, and in the course of decades of work, these images of Christ were pieced together, stone by stone, by Mahommedans. The Christian conquerors, who perhaps did not always understand what was being done, and were certainly more tolerant in these respects than people are nowadays, allowed Arabic texts from the Koran to be traced inside the roof of their chapel — a humorous revenge on the part of these paynims!

While mass was said, the roof remained in darkness. Afterwards it was illuminated by hidden lights high up; and, though I had myself tipped the verger to turn the electric switch, it seemed to me as if a magical heaven had suddenly disclosed itself to my gaze, so eerily soft,

SICILIAN GOTHIC

so enigmatically intertwined, were the lines of this ancient wooden roof, with its colours that had a subdued lustre like those on the wings of wearied butterflies.

The cardinal's taste has banished from this chapel its treasures: an uncouth font, embossed silver chalices, and the like. They are kept in a glass case outside. When the priests show them, the visitor will find among them two precious ivory boxes. They are covered with carven scrolls, the figures of animals, Arabic and Cufic inscriptions, words in a language which no philologist has fully identified. In these receptacles, the great lords of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries used to keep hidden away (and more or less sacred) their toilet essences, their oils, and their unguents.

At length the most venerable of the priests asks the custodian of the treasures to show us the charter of the foundation. The custodian hesitates, as if he had been told to disclose the forbidden relics at Pompeii; his superior quietly repeats the order. Then the brother produces some gigantic keys of ancient design, makes as if he did not know which of them would unlock the chest, dallies awhile. Finally he takes out a packet wrapped in brocade, and, unfolding this, lays some documents on the table, furtively trying to keep one of them out of sight. The prelate, a smile on his lips, moves to look into the wrapper himself, whereupon the other is overborne, and promptly takes from its silken cover the invaluable charter. Unfolding it, he spreads it before us.

Dark-red interspersed with lighter tints, of the hue of very old Chambertin, is this parchment. The writing on it is in large letters, Latin script, with flourishes, readable enough withal, silver on the red ground. Roger promises his new church manifold favours and gifts. The brother gently kisses the charter. Then, feeling himself under observation, he glances with insuperable mistrust at the strangers who dare to read what is more than sacred, since it is unique.

Chance Encounters

The more we travel, the more do we become accustomed to being disappointed with famous things, and to being amazed or impressed by chance finds. Villa Giulia, for instance, a public park on the sea-shore, is both famous and dull, with its fancy grottoes, its statuettes, and its prim walks. As for plants and flowers, they are more abundant and more charming at the Villa Garibaldi and in the Botanical Gardens. I am bored as I turn to leave the Giulia.

What a queer-looking old fellow yonder! He is there under the midday sun, hoeing the iris borders that deck the alley-ways. He weeds the beds, smooths out the points of the petals; then, tremulous with age, he stoops, lento lento, to clear away the hoed weeds. The keeper only looks at him because I am looking, smiles, and says: "That is Prince M.; you may remember his name because he was a Minister of State in Rome thirty years ago; now he is eighty-four. He comes here every morning when the weather is fine, and weeds

the beds for love of the thing — often works an hour at a time."

I visit a couple of the churches mentioned by Baedeker, and am unrewarded for my pains. Then a heavy shower of rain drives me for shelter into the doorway of a church which the guide-book ignores. I enter, to find a masterpiece. Most graceful, splendid in its variety of colour, light and airy; the best that the baroque style can show in the matter of cupolas, golden imageries, ornamental borders, and rose-windows! (San Giuseppe.)

Losing my way, I find myself in narrow streets, lined by tall houses. Washing, an abundance of it, hangs out to dry. How annoying to have gone astray like this. I might just as well be in the purlieus of Naples, and the Museum will soon close. As I fume and fret, there appears from a side street a tall, dark, handsome, and fashionably dressed woman. Her feet shod with miracles of tiny shoes, she picks her path among the clothes-lines, steps daintily through the mire and the garbage. Is she going to see her washerwoman, I wonder; or coming back from an assignation?

Monreale

No more splendid picture-book could be opened for children, in order to teach them the story of God and his Son. Considered as a whole, the famous cathedral at Palermo arouses an impression of coldness and vacancy, because the light enters it through large windows of clear glass; because the ceiling is new; because the pavement has been restored; because every

nook and cranny is clean-cut, firm, swept and garnished as if for a museum. As in the Palatina, but here far too crudely lighted, tall marble pedestals sustain walls and cupolas, pillars and columns, all covered with gold mosaic. Neither pictures nor banners, neither grey surfaces nor white, to relieve the display of marble and mosaic. When we look up, however, we see mosaics that strike even us heathens dumb.

Here the whole of Old Testament history is retold in simpler and yet grander speech. A child can understand it; an old man must re-read the message. But the expressionists, instead of revering these wonders, being born decadents, would fain imitate the one thing that is inimitable — primitiveness. Neither in San Marco, nor in Giotto's frescoes at Padua, nor in the Sistine, hardly even in Orvieto, is the phrasing so direct. At times it is almost merry.

Pious realism. In the beginning was the word, and here the word is pictured. Yet there has been studious observation both of the natural and of the peculiar. Finest of all (as in cartoons elsewhere) are the Days, in which God still walked in his world alone, except for the presence of one or two of the nobler beasts. We see the Creation of the Stars, and at sight of it cubists burst into tears, as if witnessing the art revelations of a Congo nigger. There is a Creation of Eve which makes us feel that surely Michelangelo must have visited Sicily. In all the mosaics, God is indulgent and gentle.

Christ, on the other hand, though as a rule in such compositions he is portrayed as long-suffering when compared with his Father the ruler of heaven and earth,

MONREALE

is in these twelfth-century mosaics a wrathful and malicious avenger. Thus does he look down on us from the interior of the dome: gloomy, watchful, retributive, in every respect a Jew of the old dispensation.

Nowhere else is antisemitism more effectively reduced to absurdity.

SICILIANA

The Temple and the Girl — Metopes — Across the Island — Girgenti — Sulphur — The Flaming Mountain

SICILIANA

The Temple and the Girl

We travel to see the pillars of Segesta, but arrive, to begin with, at nothing more than a lonely station-house on which "Segesta" is inscribed. We quit the train, wait awhile, and then go into the house, to ask the station-master if he can supply us with anything to eat.

A poor little room, and three generations dwell therein. Nowhere else in Sicily does our reception smack of the antique so much as here at the station, far from the ancient columns. The eldest girl is twelve or thirteen; to-morrow she will be a marriageable young woman; in three years a mother. Can she be considered really good-looking? The troubles of a penurious life have already written their marks upon her ivory-tinted cheeks; the expression in her eyes (dark as the darkest of purple grapes) bespeaks premature self-denial; but hopefulness shows as well. She bustles about; sets chairs for us; and, in a singsong dialect, with the peculiar "r" which is used on all the three coasts of Sicily and seems to have been imported from Poland, she asks whether eggs and oranges will suffice us. Then, better than her word, she brings also milk and goat's-milk cheeses; and her mother — unquestionably a beautiful woman, suckling the baby — smilingly lets her do as she likes.

By the window sits grandfather, well wrapped up, though not yet bowed with his years. In truth, it is pretty cold, and the veteran still feels the chilliness of long past campaignings, under Garibaldi. A man of eighty-four, cheery withal, and glad that his son, being an official, was not called up for service during the Great War.

This son, a tall and taciturn islander, comes and goes while we talk, and exchanges meaning glances with his wife concerning the strangers. Now grandmother appears; a merry old dame, glad to hear a word or two about Palermo, which she has not visited for twenty years. There is also a little boy, who uses her as a barricade from behind which he can study us unobserved.

Over the table there hangs a venerable holy picture, and above this an oil-painting which sets forth the life of man. We see him from birth until the age of fifty climbing the hill; in the cradle, at school, first love, marriage, parenthood, prosperity; then slowly going down the declining slope, to the chair of old age, where the grandfather is now sitting.

Granny smiles, as she watches my eyes travel from the picture to the inmates of the room, and then back to the picture. How small is the circle of life, but how great are the expectations of the girl, whose ardent gaze would fain wrest from us the secrets of the world! "Noi siamo impiegati," she says, as if she would entrench herself behind her poverty.

Leaving the railway, our road crosses a ford, and then clambers into the hills. The mountain track makes the

sharp turn at whose angle Oedipus, long since, met his unknown father. Quite Greek is the aspect of this extensive, treeless, and deserted landscape; grave like that of Thessaly, rather than cheerful like the mountains of Peloponnesus. We make our way through rubble and detritus. Once there were tall oak forests here.

Of a sudden the lonely temple discloses itself.

From no other viewpoint is it so lovely as from this, when first seen from below, at a distance of about two hundred paces. With one exception, the Apollo temple of Bassæ, the temple of the Phigaleians, it is the most entrancingly simple vestige of classical architecture I have ever seen. Its charm is unique, for it is an incompleted structure, not a ruin. No scattered and broken masonry encumbers the ground. Every stone stands just as it was first placed here by the hands of the Greeks, whose work was left unfinished. The temple was intended to guard the glorious site. To crown this site, the flourishing colony summoned a great artist from Athens.

But when, in the middle of the fifth century B.C., he had erected the columns and the entablature, there came wars and pestilences, tyrants and revolutions. Segesta was impoverished for a while, grew rich once more, then again poor. The Romans came, and after them the Christians, extending their grasp over the island; barbarians, negroes, Moors from Africa, blonde beasts from Normandy, successively invaded Sicily; pointed arches, mosques, minarets, and cupolas fell, and lie buried beneath the railway tracks. But in the

far-off mountainous interior, for ever unfinished and for ever undamaged, the six-and-thirty Doric columns still stand, bearing up no roof, as if in a half-made model.

Demeter was to have dwelt here, but her mother Cybele, herself homeless, had to take her to and fro over the wide world. Thus unhoused does she still wander, because her temple at Segesta has never been roofed in.

The violet sea in the distant bay darkens, and speedily as may be we stumble back to the road, for night is coming down almost as swiftly as in the tropics. This plateau, which belongs to the heroic age, seems more unreal than ever. How did those gorgeous wild lilies, which light up the wilderness, find their way into a region sacred to rocks and clouds, and to the six-and-thirty columns which as if by a god's whim stand alone on a mountain-side, to wait another two millenniums for their completion, at the whim of another god?

The girl welcomes us back with composure. It is beyond her understanding that people can climb for hours to look at a few old pillars, instead of playing their parts in the live world, which must certainly begin where the rails end.

Metopes

Three of them depict love; perhaps the fourth does so likewise.

First, Heracles overcoming Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons. Thus should Achilles and Penthesilea be portrayed, and Kleist's hysterical drama of the latter name seems, when I think of it while contemplating this metope, more detestable than ever. Here, both the

demigod and the Amazon are healthily enraged; his foot grips hers like a vise, while with his left hand he seizes her by the hair. She is harsh and virile, thus resembling her assailant, but of more delicate build none the less. Love as a wrestling match; fiery, violent, scarcely enjoyable. Everything turns on the question as to who will gain the victory.

Secondly, Zeus contemplating Hera after she has been rejuvenated by the girdle of Venus. Zeus's demeanour expresses a wonderful mingling of masterfulness and eager longing; it is oriental and tyrannical. He leans back like a connoisseur; and yet, with a passionate sweep of the arm, he demands possession. Hera is in the mood of a woman who, though hesitant, will comply. She is, be it only for a moment, maiden rather than goddess.

Thirdly, the inferno — as Greeks conceived it. Artemis slaying Actæon. Tragical passion, and stoical acceptance of doom. The fierce revengefulness of Artemis, who has eyes for nothing but her hounds, is wellnigh sadistic; while the splendid Actæon, still defending himself when half torn to pieces, looks like a man who has composed his mind for the descent into Tartarus. One only of the hounds, the foremost of them, recognizing the demigod, dares not attack.

Such are the metopes of Selinunt.

Across the Island

The ancient gods still live in Sicily. Here the traveller who has never visited Greece can at times fancy himself transported thither. Demeter showers her blessings on

the broad valleys, which are carpeted with her treasures, from the mountain ridge of the north to where the surges lash the southern shore. In the north, where the seas are more enclosed, and the waves less violent, vines grow to within a few feet of the water's edge. Literally, the stems spring from the white sand-dunes, and yet bear grapes. We see field after field of red beets. Tomatoes are already (in February) more than a hand's breadth above the ground. Lettuces and leeks grow in rows between the vines. Beans, with lilac-tinted flowers, are more than three feet high. Around and beyond these, stretching for miles, are the teeming wheat fields. The plum-trees are in leaf, and the fig-trees bear green fruit. Almond blossom and pear blossom surmount the wheat fields, and between them are evergreen plantations: lemon groves with their yellow fruit; and olive orchards, whose ancient trees spread silver fingers towards the blue sky.

The agriculturists who do all this work — where do they live? We see a few of them toiling in the fields, with the aid of stalwart donkeys and mules. The farms are scattered and inconspicuous. At times we could fancy ourselves in Anatolia, near Tarsus, where the land is fertile. The villages and towns are treeless; the white houses, with closed fronts, as in Tunis, reveal nothing of their inner life. On the roads (white, like the houses) we see men, and occasionally women, riding their donkeys into town. They sit astride, on sacks, wrapped in a shawl worn burnous-fashion, and have for headgear a pointed cap, knitted, of a Spanish pattern. They smoke as they ride, and are mute.

We pass an almond grove, pink with blossom. The trees rise out of a carpet of marguerites. Orange-trees, whose fruit was gathered only a few days since, are again in bloom. The lemons, however, are still hanging from the boughs, abundant as in the Garden of the Hesperides, or in a Marées fresco. Amid all this wealth of foliage, only the figs show nakedly, like grey ghosts. Together with the flattened and lifeless leaves of the cactus plants, they seem to warn us that we are not far from the tropics.

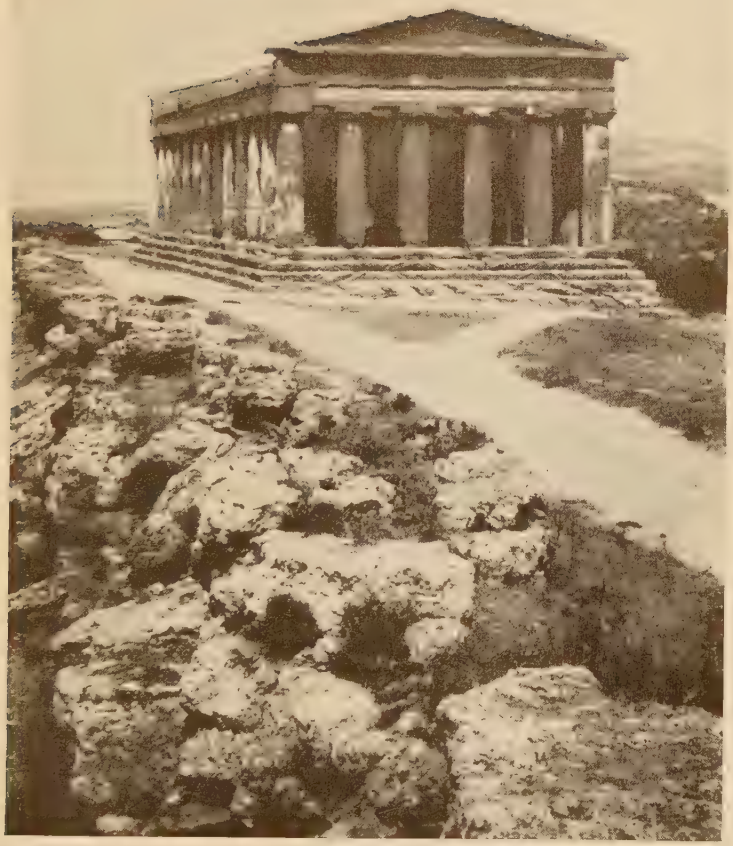
Farther inland, when we are nearing the chain of higher hills, we find that golden grain is the main crop. Greyish-yellow blocks of stone, like huge dice flung pell-mell by the treeless mountains, project from amid the standing corn. Little rivers have scooped out valleys, which steepen into gorges as we trace them upwards. In these gorges, centaurs used to live, coming down every evening to drink at the ford. Nowadays white goats make their way through the brook, following a dog to a pen hedged in with thorn bushes, and other dogs run out to meet them. Terra-cotta amphora on head, a girl descends to fill it at the stream. A herd-boy throws stones at kids that are straying too far. An old man riding a grey jackass completes the picture. The flowers of Persephone, blue anemones, and yellow mountain narcissuses, abound. Cattle like those Apollo herded of old, dark brown, huge-eyed, and statuesque, gaze solemnly at the slowly moving train; the cattle-man, leaning upon a gnarled stick, is undismayed at the sight of our modern dragon of an engine, snorting its way towards the coast. As for Hephaestus, he indeed

still lives behind those grey, rocky walls yonder, and supplies the modern world with the sulphur he has boiled in his ancient cauldrons. From time to time we see towns, flat and greyish, crowning the hilltops, stone-walled as in the Middle Ages, silent and watchful. Who dwells in them? A stiff-necked generation, one fancies; folk who return no thanks for the gifts of the gods.

At length, once again, we glimpse the blue realm of Poseidon. We quitted the sea in the morning, to get back to it at evening on another coast, and thus to be reminded that we are on an island. Like swans opening their white wings against the breeze, move the sailing ships across its waters. We know that they are making for Acragas — the sometime home of Empedocles, the proud city of Agrigentum. At our first glance into the western sky we recognise the silhouette of what is left of Girgenti.

Girgenti

It is a garden, this isle of gardens, and from a field, enclosed by stone walls, comes the song of girls, some of whom are hoeing, and others gathering dried wood. They sing "La gioia d'amore"; but, as I pass, I note that they are barely twelve. Song rises everywhere from these hot and tranquil lava fields, from the grotesque hedges or cactus, from the sweet-smelling lucerne, from behind the ornamental persiennes of Spanish design. It comes from Saracen windows, where in the crumbling castle walls peasants have built their huts, and from the dark and hidden niches of Spanish chapels



GIRGENTI

built upon Roman foundations. Now we catch sight of the temple, on a little mound, still a good way beneath us, golden yellow in the evening calm.

How powerfully the significance, purposive and simple, of these Greek buildings emerges, when we can ignore the light and shade of the columns. This temple, for instance, has the dimensions of a great barn, and as such was it first conceived.

In pictures of Girgenti, what allures us is the magnificent state of preservation; but when we see it in its actuality, we are far more impressed by its substance and its situation. The most insipid among the ancient buildings of Athens is the Theseion, which stands beside the contemporary roadway as perfectly preserved as if it were a model; it is too small, too modern in its aspect, too finished. But the Parthenon, because it is built of the everlasting marble of Hymettus and stands upon the hill of the gods, has been able to defy time, and though breached, was not destroyed even by the cannonballs of the German captain who, a mercenary in the Venetian service, once bombarded it.

In Sicily there is shell-marble, and the Greek colonisers used it for building. Coloured and soft, it grows in beauty the more it is weathered. Moreover, if it be mere sentimental romanticism to be touched at sight of a shell millions of years old, set free from the stone in which it has been imbedded because time and the sea winds have been at work upon that stone for two millenniums — well, I will plead guilty to so-old-fashioned a feeling. What matter, after all, how many pillars there be, the style of the flutings, the period of

the architraves? Far more moving, far more wonderful, is this anomalous shell, disclosed to us of a later age through the lawful operation of natural forces.

Or we are taken aback by quaint arches, which it has pleased those of an after time to build into the ancient structure; for Romans desecrated the temple of Juno, and Christians that of Concordia. Superadded structures, party walls, and false arches, assimilate a heathen temple to a church, so that the perplexed interior stares in bewilderment at the heavens which the pantheon must share, and does not know to which of the gods its own supplications are directed. Like pilgrims at prayer, beside the second of the two temples six ancient olive-trees, though bowed by the wind, are sedulous in their devotions.

Now the façade begins to glow; within, the soft stone seems to quicken with life; the columns of the inner row, shaded by the entablature when the sun is high, redden in the hour before sunset. These pillars depend for their effect upon lighting and position; unmeaning upon a verdant hillside, they are full of eerie purpose when this rosy splendour falls aslant on them. Here comes a herdsman, shouting to his bullocks and calves as he drives them homeward past the southern wall of the temple. The sun, sinking into the sea, is his timepiece, just as it was for his Greek ancestors in the days of long ago. He pauses, wondering what he can do in return for the largesse of cigarettes dropped to him from above. Pointing north, he says in his rough island patois: "Shall I guide you thither, Signore?"

My eyes follow the wave of his hand. I see a town, likewise reddening in the sunset; a town on a steep hillside, flat roofs, white houses, surmounted by the helmet of the cathedral: Girgenti, the southern fortress built by men from Rome so many hundred years back. Up there I am looking at the Middle Ages: taciturn, menacing, fortified, suspicious, grey. Down here, close at hand, is the antique: camped in the open, unrestrained, chromatic, expansive, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

Night comes swiftly in these latitudes. I make my way back into the town of narrow streets, with giddy stairways, lofty terraces; the town of churches and palaces; another world — not mine. Pink, fast fading, still lingers on the seascape, and out of the relics of the sunset glow there rises a shadow, a rock, the island of Pantellaria. Beyond, in the offing, is a strip upon the skyline, darkling, faint, but real.

Africa!

Sulphur

Far from the towns of the coast, in the interior of this sinister island, which is convulsed by volcanic activities — that is where the sulphur deposits are. A narrow-gauge railway brings it down to Porto Empedocle for shipment. The name of this seaport has a romantic rather than a classical flavour. Empedocles was a sort of Greek Marcus Aurelius, both statesman and sage; saviour in type, no less than philosopher; a man who quitted life of his own free will. Since this atmosphere of wonder softens his outlines, we can let our fancy run,

can dramatise as well as analyse. On the wall of the town, built of huge blocks of stone, hard by the temple, Empedocles pondered the chances of life and death, and pondered likewise the destinies of his native city and his fellow-citizens. When he built them a fortress, this was none the worse because he simultaneously excogitated the parable of a fortress. Thus he was in the line of succession which leads down to Frederick II and to Leonardo.

The sulphur mines are of an antiquated pattern, and produce rather a ludicrous impression. For the most part, exit from the shaft is provided only by flights of stairs. Dust is rife. Nothing has been done to temper the heat or exorcise the dangers natural to these underground workings. The difference between them and the coalmines of western Europe or the goldmines of South Africa, recalls the difference between a windjammer and a White Star liner. But the miners who guide us in our inspection are kindly, cheerful folk. They carry naked lights, for there are no explosive gases to be dreaded.

One who will face the heat, the damp, and the labour of descending and reclimbing the stairways will, however, be richly rewarded for his pains. He will enter caves of golden crystal, like amber palaces; will traverse scintillating galleries; will find himself in aureate chambers whose walls send back marvellous reflexions of the miners' flickering candle-flames. Below ground, there is nothing to dispel the charm. Not until we return to the light of day do these wondrous phantasms dwindle to commonplace. Now we

are looking at yellow blocks of sulphur, which are being methodically packed into the little trucks which will transport them to the coast; sulphur destined for use in gunpowder, for the making of lucifer matches, and for medicinal employment. All over Sicily we encounter these trains loaded with the yellow mineral. They might serve as armorial bearings for Father Vulcan.

The Flaming Mountain

The first sight of Etna is like the first encounter with a man of genius. Even those who have been familiar with the mountain from childhood upwards, are amazed by its titanic proportions. Those who dwell near it, might well call it (as the Eastern African negroes call their own snow-capped volcano Kilimanjaro) "Father."

As we travel through green fields on our way to the eastern coast, between the granite escarpments of the hills, on which remote fortified towns are perched, we catch momentary glimpses, afar off and as if through a veil, of the white peak that surmounts the violent-tinted mass of the colossus. With a kindred sense of awe do we, on rare occasions, see for the first time some great man, whose impressive personality looms fitfully through the ruck of lesser mortals thronging round him.

Such was the accelerando of my mind as I sat in the shaky railway-carriage on its way down the broadening valley, with growing crops extending on either hand beneath the rays of the westering sun. I lived by faith

in the inner vision, not the outer; till at length, and suddenly, His Majesty disclosed himself once more, towering above the chain of smaller mountains, hoary-headed, mighty, and yet graceful. "Here I am. Perhaps you can see me now?" said the giant. My eye could linger on the gently sloping sides of the obtuse pyramid. Etna, in the distance, as a land of promise! Then the cruder mountains close at hand thrust in between, cutting off the splendid vision.

When the third manifestation was vouchsafed, a little white cloud, rounded and cushiony, was issuing from the apex of the cone. This was the ardour of his hidden heart, a heart wrapped in snow. He shaped that ardour into a coronal of vapours; a smoke wreath, to hide from the prying world the perfect purity of his summit.

Lonelier and vaster, taller and more commanding, became the huge cone projecting from the plain. The flanks seemed limitless, as if the mountain had resolved to thrust the points of union with the levels of common humanity farther and yet farther from his culminating peak. One of these flanks, the longest, sloped down to the water's edge. Around the peak, the clouds grew rosier, and the white point stood out with a metallic shimmer against the pale-green background of the eastern sky. The villages in the foothills were lost in the evening mist, while above them a roseate oriflamme still waved athwart the land. More divine than ever did he look in the fading light, as he wrapped us in the embrace of his tremendous shadow, and our train entered the noisy seaport town of Catania.

As we climb the lower slopes of Etna on muleback, we find that the flora changes from stage to stage of the ascent — just as it does on Kilimanjaro, of which Etna continually reminds us. Riding up from the wind-swept coast to the scorched vineyards of Nicolosi, the traveller is oppressed by the heat, and has no energy to spare for conversation. He is content, in wondering silence, to watch the trains of pack-mules as he meets them coming down with loads of freshly gathered snow, wrapped in green leaves and tied in bales, on its way to cool the throats of the Catanians.

Not until we are above the three thousand feet line does anything like woodland begin. Here, at the edge of brownish lava fields, we ride past the gigantic broom bushes which were celebrated in song by Leopardi. Though their shade is refreshing, they are almost alarming in their tropical luxuriance. Our sure-footed mounts pick their way cautiously amid extinct and decayed craters, on a faintly indicated path that leads across the relics of great eruptions — bronze, coppery, and reddish-violet in hue. At six thousand feet or more, on a volcanic plateau, we reach the observatory and the hut.

The winds rising from three seas, and thus blowing from all points of the compass, assail the lone mountain with their rough wooing. For a while, the glow that has lasted on from noontide persists in the frames of mules and riders; but when night has fallen, though we are in Sicily and it is August, we must wrap ourselves in woollen rugs, and we shiver none the less, as we huddle round the scanty fire in the hut.

At two in the morning, we make a fresh start. The lanterns throw a fitful light upon the reddish-black lava, in which, as we approach the actual crater, soft patches grow more abundant. Eastward, in the blue, we see the fugitive radiations that forerun the appearance of dawn's rosy fingers. Now the effulgence spreads across the lava, throws into relief the figures of the climbers, makes the form of our guide stand out clear, while, at a height nearing ten thousand feet, our teeth chatter with cold, except in the grateful moments when we are thawed by wafts of hot air.

There is growling and uproar from the heights above us. Our boot-heels dent the soft, warm lava; and, ere long, wraiths of vapour begin to curl upwards wherever we set our feet. After five minutes of such walking, we take their appearance as a matter of course. They are but the emissaries of the fire demon hidden just beneath the surface.

We reach the crater, and are dazzled for a moment by the glare — stronger, now, when the edge no longer intervenes.

Then we look down into the interior.

Like an open wound, the fiery mouth unceasingly discharges fragments of matter. One who has seen Vesuvius since the last eruption, knows that its new crater is an amphitheatre, a coliseum, upon whose topmost marge (where, in the Coliseum at Rome, the emperor's sailors used to spread awnings for shade) the traveller stands, to divine rather than to watch the bubbling of fire and stone at war in the witches' cauldron beneath.

ETNA

But the mouth of Etna resembles a chimney. The inner surface of the crater is a sheer precipice, and the volcano impels its shots skyward as if they came from a mortar aimed at the zenith. In the depths, which seem magnified by this steepness, the furnace glows unceasingly, though for the most part, with the stillness of a beast of prey crouching for a spring. I shall never forget the impression produced on my mind. Methought that demoniacal monsters must be the servitors of this red-hot fountain, in which no stars are mirrored.

Our ears are deafened by the rumblings from the underworld; our eyes plumb the abyss whence ever and again small, white-hot, sulphurous masses are ejected. A summons comes from the east, and we turn to look at the rising sun. A half-circle first, standing clear-cut on the horizon, it speedily grows into the full round of the new day, and stabs us with its hostile spear. Therewith the sea, too, seems to climb. As the light strengthens, the land rushes up into sight; Calabria, Malta, the Aeolian Islands, seem to emerge from the waters. Far, far to the west, faintly discernible in the dim distance, is a bluish cloud on the uttermost verge — once again the coast of Africa.

Silently the guide turns to depart, and we follow in silence. Stretching westward across the lava waste at our feet is a huge sugarloaf hat. It is the shadow of Etna, the lone giant. Thus (as Buddha phrases it) do great men, from the heights upon which they dwell, cast the shadows of their coming and going, the images of their inscrutable thoughts over the countryside out of

which they have climbed, and which, from their eyrie, they rule.

In Messina there still lingers an aroma from the days of adventure and piracy, an atmosphere that reminds us of strange happenings and wonderful discoveries in far-away lands. We breathe it even when we are breathing in the odours of oil and fish, seasalt and smoke, that enwrap (almost visibly) the masts of the ships. Sea-ports are still parables of restless human souls; the souls of those who cannot rest at home, and are impelled to seek abroad — what they will never find.

On the Messina ferry-boat, which has swallowed the whole of our train in its capacious maw, I stood one evening, about to quit the island, and saw a great sailing ship steering into port. How much more beautifully and how much more quietly is everything done upon this complicated and old-fashioned seacraft. She rounds the lighthouse, and the pilot approaches her in his little rowing-boat.

This is taken in tow. Black shadows climb the masts. At the top of the mainmast is a sailor, hanging over the yard; he clasps the topsail in his arms, draws it in closer and closer, till it lies against the mast in a white roll.

Others slowly furl the mainsail, the mizzen-sheet being left to the last. Barefooted, the men clamber up and down the ratlines. A boat, lustily rowed, leaves the ship. That is the captain, who is in a hurry to get ashore. Four men, standing to their oars, drive his gig through the water. Thus did Roger land here,

and Frederick. No different was it in the days of Odysseus.

The ship has been robbed of her beauty. Nudely significant, the masts stretch upwards into the evening sky. She has anchored; is prisoned. The same thing happens to great men when they quit their free solitude, to enter the market-places, the sea-ports. With due precaution, their wings are clipped, that they may be rendered safe, kept in humdrum surroundings, captive among the ranks of everyday human beings.

We steam southward; but for hours we remain under the watchful eye of the mountain of fire that adorns and imperils Trinacria.

THE BAZAAR IN TUNIS

THE BAZAAR IN TUNIS

A WHITE gateway, Moorish in design, separates the solidly built and commonplace European colony from the exhalations of the old walled town of the Arabs. This is a symbol of spiritual enmity. Here in Tunis, and here almost alone, are these forever alien elements thus literally sundered. Only at intervals do the young Arab dandies, walking with a fine swing, give a decorative touch to the sober streets where dwells the so-called intelligentsia of the West. Passing through the aforesaid gate, at one stride I find myself in the East.

The houses are white, and almost windowless. Their upper storeys are the closely barred cages of women with a slave mentality. The doors of the courtyards are decked out with beautiful ironwork. When (as rarely happens) one of these doors is open, I catch a glimpse of a garden, where palm-trees grow.

Here is the bazaar. The alley-ways are roofed in, narrower than those in Stamboul, of heavier construction, and more elaborately barricaded. In the alley of the tailors, two young fellows come to one of the booths, godlike in their poise, not touching the ground with their heels — though they wear heeled slippers. The shopkeeper shows them gandoras of the latest design. In solemn silence, they finger these wares,

pondering their choice. Nor has the vendor much to say; barely a word now and again, in praise of his goods. He disappears within, to return with fresh miracles of colour: maize-yellow and grey; scarlet and emerald-green; silk stockings to match.

The next alley is that of the jewellers, where precious stones, unmounted, are placed in shells to tempt the purchaser. If a passer-by points to one of the shells the salesman picks out two or three of the gems and holds them exposed upon the brown palm of his left hand; then he takes one of these stones between thumb and forefinger of the right hand, and holds it up for the customer to see the sparkle. Both seller and buyer are chary of speech.

The perfumers! They steal away our senses. Here is one, squatting like an idol, made drowsy by the reek of his own essences; cross-legged, slender of limb, yellowed with age, on a high divan behind a trestled table; looking as if he had sat there for ages without ever leaving his place. Dignified in mien, proud of his calling, he motions with his eyes to divans right and left, let into the walls at a lower level. When his customers sit there, they are in the posture of worshippers adoring the Buddha. Three walls of plank enclose the whole of his kingdom; from where he sits, he can reach every one of his phials, stretching out his arm to it like a dumb sorcerer. He feels behind him without looking round, and brings forth a bottle. Withdrawing the stopper, which is prolonged within the phial into a glass rod that dips down into the contents, grasping my hand and softly pulling it towards him across the table, he now

traces a line on the palm with the end of the glass rod. Then he lifts my hand to my face, that I may smell. Jasmine! All this without saying a word. When I nod approval, he smiles with the wisdom of old age, detached, aloof.

Next, with a repetition of the same series of movements he gives me a whiff of another perfume, a golden-yellow oil; attar of roses. Then a green essence; cypress. Now a whitish one, ylang-ylang, followed, in turn, by narcissus, lilac, clove. After this, he opens a small, round, inlaid box, and takes out a pinch of the powder it contains, musk; the same with opoponax. Now come crystalline substances; ambergris, myrrh, frankincense. This last he turns in a tiny censer, which he has placed and lighted with much ceremony, as if wishing to dispel the gathering darkness, though darkness, in truth, befits him and his slumbrous essences. My senses are by now confused, and I no longer know how to choose what I will buy. Whoever might wish to do so, could rob me; I would pay any price; follow any leader. The old man with the yellow fingers is well aware of this, and knows how to turn it to account; but he does not unstopper any more bottles for me to sample, no longer smiles at me questioningly. Selecting certain flasks, he decants some of their contents into delicately made little cylinders of fine glass, and seals them one after another. Not until he hands them to me, do I realise that they are the perfumes to which I had nodded approval. Not seven, but a hundred, are these spices of Araby — narcotising, one and all, for they are not diluted like

those of the West; they are pure and concentrated essences.

With a mist before my eyes, I steal back through the alley-way of the perfumers. The bazaar is almost empty now; the last customers are streaming out through the huge gateway. The janitor, a powerfully built, elderly man, with a shock of grey hair and a visage which arouses thoughts of Jeremiah the prophet, closes the heavy door behind us. He locks up for the night. I hear creakings and groanings as he turns the key, and the reluctant bolt shoots into its socket.

The East is now left to its private meditations. If the orientals put their heads together and discuss the ways of the white lords, they may well smile. They have venerable souls; we, at best, have a youthful spirit.

EGYPT

The Nile — Sunlight and Moonlight at Ghizeh — The Key of Life — Temples Old and New — King and Falcon — Arabesque — Heads in Alexandria — in the Suez Canal

EGYPT

The Nile

I

The river cut a way for itself straight across the desert. Taking its rise on the Equator, in the great lakes of the African highlands, the White Nile rushed over its rocky bed, seeking freedom and cleansing in the thunderous falls, as it coursed ever northward to its death in the Midland Sea. The wilderness had no terrors for it; allured it, rather. Instead of turning eastward at Berber, to find in the Red Sea a speedy release from toil and danger, it made a huge sweep to the west, and then, digging a channel across the Sahara, created Egypt. The longest of all rivers — three thousand five hundred miles from Murchison Falls to Damietta, and from the source to the sea fully half the length of Africa — it fashioned the narrowest country in the world, the narrowest and the most prolific. Therein this hardiest of streams became the progenitor of the most ancient of all civilisations.

For the Almighty, sending the White Nile through the desert and wishing him to beget wondrous offspring, gave him, when his course was half run, a female companion. From the mountains of Abyssinia, towering heavenward as high as Mont Blanc, God dispatched a second Nile, destined to contribute the fertilising

powers of the upland rains. This was the Bar-el-Azrak, the Turbid Stream, the Dark River, the Blue Nile; and it brought detritus from the hills to mingle with the clear waters of the White Nile. When summer comes, and the monsoon that blows from India discharges its freight of moisture upon the tableland where the Dark River rises, this second Nile flows fast and furious, and carries with it so much suspended mud that, in the spuming moment of the confluence, it seems as if the White Nile were dammed up by the lesser stream, and as if the Blue Nile had taken sole possession of their common channel. Thanks to this fierce love-contest, perennially renewed, there has come into being the land of Egypt, so rich in crops, in herds, in human beings. Two thousand miles below Khartum, where the nuptial encounter of the twain occurs, is Alexandria, at one of the lower angles of the Delta. By the fertilising slime washed down from the Abyssinian plateau, the whole of this long strip of desert is transformed into Elysian fields. Yet nowhere does it exceed twelve or thirteen miles in width. In places, it is so narrow that (if the Nile did not bar your route) you could walk across it in an hour.

II

Two sounds are heard over the Nile; those who beget them are styled Hedaya and Sakiyeh. Hedaya is the hen-harrier, crying on the wing. Sakiyeh is the water-wheel, almost as old an inhabitant of the region as the blue hawk, for both wheel and bird have been summoned into the desert by the Nile. From sunrise till

THE DESERT

the first star flashes into the night sky, day after day throughout the millenniums the whine of the water-wheel has sounded athwart this narrow land; hard by the river, or a league away on the desert's marge, the singing is heard, without pause or rest; and the fellaheen will tell you that the souls of the departed are moaning.

It is but a way of speaking. The countrymen know better. When you draw near, you will see that there is a fellah in charge of the turning wheel. The trunks of two palm-trees stand as pillars, and across these, at a moderate height, a third trunk is fastened as cross-bar. From a socket therein, yet another tree-trunk descends vertically to a socket in the ground. This fourth trunk is movable, is the axle of a horizontal wheel, turned by a blindfolded ox. The groaning sound is made by the axle in its sockets. The wheel bears cogs which intersect with the cogs of another wheel, vertically disposed, its lower edge three feet below the level of the ground, dipping into an open conduit. This, too, is nothing more than a palm-tree, hollowed out. Earthenware vessels are fastened to the rim of the upright wheel, like the buckets on a dredger; and in these vessels, at each revolution, water is lifted out of the conduit to the level of the top of the wheel. Thus, by relays of water-wheels, the fertilising moisture is brought from the river to the outermost verge, and distributed wherever it can make a green leaf spring.

Under everyday conditions, the Nile, wending its way through the desert, can fertilise nothing more than its own immediate borders — nine hundred yards wide

though it be. It cannot conjure up rain out of the arid waste across which it flows. No clouds form above the burning realm of sand and sandstone. Were the masculine stream the only Nile, the land of Egypt would have remained little broader than the river as it is during a large part of the year.

But summer after summer, since the days of the Pharaohs (and unnumbered ages before), the second Nile, the Dark River, has contributed its fecundating slime, flooding and enriching the lowlands on either side of the main channel. The rains in the Abyssinian Alps bear fruit in the Soudan and in Egypt. When the freshet is over, when the creative impetus of the Blue Nile has been exhausted, the White Nile resumes its monopoly of the ordinary river-bed, and flows equably throughout the remaining seasons till another June brings another flood. Thus year by year the level of the country is imperceptibly raised, to the extent of more than three inches in a century. We know this because Father Nile has been at work a full five thousand years since men began to set up temples on his banks, and the position of these buildings shows that the bed of the river has risen sixteen feet.

From early days, those who dwelt beside the river, noting that there were years of high flood and years of low, had come to realise that it behoved them, when there was a "good Nile," to store some of the superfluity against years when a "bad Nile" should come. They built dikes to hold up the flood water; cut channels through which to distribute it over the land when the river was low; and they made water-wheels to irrigate

the countryside during the months of comparative scarcity. Thus was it in the days of Akenaton, during the second millennium of the old era; thus is it, likewise, during the second millennium of the new. Still the strip of country we call Egypt is divided into numberless quadrangles, from the largest to the smallest; still is it traversed by channels, some so broad as to be navigable by steamboats, others so narrow that they can be opened by a peasant's foot and closed by a child's hand. Till recently (as time runs in Egypt), till little more than a hundred years ago, there had been no change since the epoch of Rameses, no change in the technique of man's dealings with the Nile.

Then there came a foreign conqueror, who cherished bold thoughts. Why not turn to double account this favoured soil, which made Egypt envied of other nations? Instead of one harvest each year, would not two be forthcoming if the generative waters were more skilfully used? "With four thousand canals and sluices, I shall make this country the most fruitful in the world," said General Bonaparte. His engineers drafted designs for the proposed irrigation works, and measured the level of the stream with such accuracy that the perfected instruments of to-day cannot help us to revise their figures by more than fractions of an inch.

The Corsican went his way, leaving his schemes unfulfilled. Among those who chased his successors from the Nile was a sometime leader of Albanian clansmen, born of poor parents in the same year as Bonaparte, sprung like him from the shores of the Mediterranean — tyrannical, iron-willed, a man of

genius. Mehemet Ali, having become supreme in Egypt, began to build a dam below Cairo, his aim being to raise two cotton crops a year in the Delta. Substantially, however, he had no better success than the French.

When the English occupied the country, they were quick to recognise that, if Egyptian exports were to be increased, large-scale irrigation works were essential. Following Mehemet Ali's lead, in 1890 they completed in the Delta the first "Nile barrage," subsequently building three great dams in Upper Egypt.

III

Assouan, five hundred and fifty miles south of Cairo, was chosen by the British engineering experts as the most effective place for damming up the waters of the Nile. The site was made ready by nature for such an enterprise, at a spot where the river is exceptionally wide, and where navigation has always been hindered by the rapids of the First Cataract.

Amid the tumbled confusion of islets, rocks, and desert hillocks, of sandstone interspersed with blocks of granite that punctuate with black the yellowish waste of the more friable rock, we see a straight line ruled across the irregularities of nature's fashioning; much as, on maps of the less settled regions of the earth, a parallel of latitude will intersect the splendid medley of natural geographical features. This is the Assouan dam, ten furlongs in length, spanning the valley; the largest structure of its kind in the world; the most wonderful of all the wonders of Egypt.

IRRIGATION — OLD STYLE

IRRIGATION — NEW STYLE

One need not be a humanitarian to feel this! The building of the great stone dam was not prompted by humanitarian sentiment, any more than the discovery of an antitoxic serum is so prompted. The manufacturers of Cottonopolis wanted it as a means for bringing grist to their mills, and thus putting money in their pockets; the British State wanted it, in the belief that it would strengthen the empire's grip on Egypt; Sir Ernest Cassel lent money for its building, because he got a good rate of interest; Sir William Willcocks and Sir Benjamin Baker, who drew up the plans, were moved by an artistic impulse and by ambition. Now, when it has stood the test of time and has been doing its work for two-and-twenty years, it has bestowed on this rainless country of length without breadth, two million acres of land, and from two to three harvests every year. Within two years of its completion, Egypt was able to pay off the building costs out of surplus revenue.

For the waters held up by this embankment do not form a commonplace reservoir, and are not used to supply water-power, as in the case of most works of the kind. The arrest of flow extends to a point nearly two hundred miles above the dam. Two and a half milliards of cubic metres are kept in store here, are saved up, a capital which seems like a hoard that bears no interest — until once every year it is made interest-bearing by simply letting it flow away. From July onwards, through all the hundred and eighty sluice-gates, the dam allows the turbid waters to escape into the lower valley. Then at Cairo, just as in days of yore, the king's ceremonial barge cuts through the

symbolic cord which is stretched across the river until it is in high flood. By telegraph or wireless, the news is flashed to every village. On the instant, throughout the land of Egypt, the local authorities open the main waterways, the landowners open the subsidiary channels, and the poorest bare-footed fellah kicks down the tiny dams he has made with his own hands. Now the water-wheels turn no longer; the sound of their complaining is hushed; the dead, one must fancy, have atoned for their sins, and need no longer mourn. Every runnel brings to every field the boon of the enriching slime.

In November, when the flood has come and gone, and when the stored waters above the dam have flowed away, the chief engineer at Assouan and those in charge of the other dams close the sluices one by one, in accordance with a preconcerted plan. From now until March the storage of the waters continues, the level of the river just above the dam rising in the winter months by seventy-five feet. Then, when on the lower reaches drought becomes imminent, the electric crane on the great dam lifts the iron gates that close ten of the aforesaid hundred and eighty sluices. Slowly thenceforward, and at fixed intervals, the upper Nile releases some of its precious store. Once more the irrigation channels are filled; the water-wheels, which had resumed work in the autumn, now turn and groan throughout the livelong day, giving the water head enough to flow even to the valley's edge. The fellaheen drive their oxen; the oxen turn the wheels; gallon by gallon, pitcherful by pitcherful, the life-giving fluid is tediously lifted from tier to

tier of this primitive irrigation system, which works just as it used to in the time of the Pharaohs — just as if the spirit of man had not, in the meanwhile, excogitated and constructed ways of storing and distributing milliards of gallons at once, ways of taming the savagery of the longest river in the world.

Man has, in very truth, taught the river how to make the earth more fruitful. Slowly, very slowly, the strip of verdure that crosses the desert is growing wider. When the chief engineer, at his office on the great dam, telephones to his assistants instructing them to open, at specified times and in a certain order, three dozen more of the sluices, and when notice of what is done is wired down the river to the guardians of the lower sluices, then, for the first time since God made the desert, a hundred thousand acres of droughty sand are watered, are reached by new-made offshoots of the tamed stream. Now comes the turn of the chemist. His analysis shows that there is an excess of salt in the freshly irrigated land; he has some of this salt washed out, and reed-grass planted; next year's crop is clover; the third year's corn. By the fourth year, the land has been wrested from the desert. What Goethe in his old age, immersed in maps and plans, extolled as the greatest action of a century has been achieved.

Like his ancestor, thousands of years ago, the fellah, dull of wit, still drives his ox, shrouded in artificial night, turning the immemorial wheel. Between him and the murmuring river the intelligence of man has interposed a system of dams and sluices with machinery to work them, such as Napoleon dreamed of. Thanks

to this, the peasant now reaps a harvest thrice in every year. Thanks to this, he comes near to realise yet another dream, that of the long-dead king who had wheat growing to a height of seven ells depicted upon the walls of his tomb — for thus, he thought, would the crops flourish in Earu, the Plains of Heaven.

IV

The modern Pharaoh tricks the poor peasant just as the old one did — even more effectively, with the modern pretence of equal rights and the parliamentary vote, what time a substantial enslavement persists. On this rich soil, the richest in the inhabited world, the cultivator toils and sweats to-day as of yore. No one puts a modern plough into his weary hands. While the sugar plantations and the cotton plantations on millions of acres of Nile-side land produce crops which pour millions of English sovereigns into the pockets of successful entrepreneurs, and while the womenfolk of these same entrepreneurs flaunt their wealth in steam-yachts on the Nile or lead merry lives in such places as St. Moritz and Rapallo — professing, as far as things Egyptian are concerned, livelier interest in scarabs than in cotton, though it is cotton which clothes them in more senses than one — in the scorching sunshine of a cloudless sky, the naked Nubian must still walk behind the plough, trudging in the wake of his heavy-footed ox.

Egypt, where but a step divides the desert from the sown, is still in social matters the land of abrupt transitions: the pasha, the wealthy farmer, and the sheikh, are ever ready with the kourbash; and they treat the

PYRAMIDS IN TIME OF FLOOD

fellaheen just as (we learn from the ancient monuments) Tutankhamen treated his conquered enemies. Not even the beginnings of socialism are tolerated in Egypt. The lawyer who defended the tramwaymen on strike, not long since, in Alexandria, has been expelled from the country. Once when a pasha who had been rather too lavish in his killings of peasants was sentenced to punishment, the fellaheen of the neighbourhood were indignant with his judges!

Among such people, unawakened slaves, nine-tenths of them peasants, there are obvious possibilities for communist propaganda, seeing that the communists, also, favour a social change untempered by transitional stages. The authorities in Cairo are terribly afraid of the Red Spectre, which stalks there unseen. Already, we may surmise, the message, coming by way of Asia, must have crossed the ditch of Suez. In this part of the East there is but one barrier against the advance of the Muscovite doctrine which has made victorious progress in Asia — the barrier of the Islamite faith. Kismet! All that happens, happens according to the will of Allah, so why kick against the pricks?

England showed the wisdom of the serpent, the wisdom of the Vatican, when she introduced so-called popular education beside the Nile. Schools have been built, but there has been no reduction in the number of illiterates. Lord Cromer, having due regard to London's sensibilities, wanted to diffuse a knowledge of Christ and of the English language. Kitchener's administration rescued the peasants from the clutches of the usurers and the rich farmers. Since the English

became supreme in Egypt it has, for the first time, become possible for the son of a fellah to be a lawyer and a party leader — as was Zaghlul, who hated England. Nothing has been done by the British to awaken the fellaheen from their glorious torpor, for (working with Levantine subtlery) it is easier to come to terms with a few hundred pashas in Cairo, men interested in cotton and in political advantage, than with the enlightened strength of a population of twelve millions. Egyptian society still resembles a pyramid. Thousands of stones, assembled by slaves, are built up into a broad-based structure towering to a truncated point. This last is a platform from which a mere handful of persons can gain a pleasant outlook on life. Within, the building is hollow; and there, for centuries upon centuries, a king's mummy has been crumbling into dust.

We cannot but ask ourselves, sometimes, whether it would be a good thing to awaken the fellah, who is, after all, happy in his ignorance and his faith; whether a contented fatalist should be taught to compare his poverty with others' wealth, should be encouraged to develop wants. For years we may study a nation or a class without discovering the border-line between obtuseness and wretchedness; without hearing the music of unconscious wishes; without discerning the spiritual potentialities of those who might be touched to fine issues. But see this proud, mute, black-veiled woman. What does it matter to her that the moulder-ing rubbish in the basket she is carrying on her head, the rubbish she is going to manure her field with, is from the

ruins of the city of Memphis, once a place of world-wide renown? What concern is it of hers that, after the lapse of three thousand years, a decayed remnant of its vanished glories will bear fruit once more in the land she tills? She wants manure, not a parable!

This much only is certain. Allah is Allah. Five times a day, when the hour for prayer comes round, the peasant stops working, lets hoe or spade fall, and lifts hands to God, who will order everything as seems best to his wisdom. Nevertheless, though there be no God but Allah, the fellaheen have a second god, or idol, whose frown or smile far away in the African highlands decides whether the Egyptian harvest shall be scanty or plentiful. When I asked a fellah whether he, too, believed that the English were planning to rob Egypt of water, he answered, looking skyward with a smile: "They cannot take the Nile from us. Allah has given us the river, that the poor man's field may be watered."

V

Do they want to rob Egypt of the Nile?

Egyptian politics revolve round the question! The Nile has made this country, which will be doomed to destruction if the river runs dry. The nationalists in Cairo are tormented by the burning thought that England harbours some such malevolent design. High up in the Sudan a barrage on the Blue Nile has just been completed. An enormous dam, five miles in length, is planned for the White Nile.

This vast region of the Sudan, more than a thousand miles from north to south and nearly as much from east

to west, has two million inhabitants. Thus one of the most sparsely populated abuts on one of the most densely populated countries in the world. For Britain it is a possession of supreme importance, seeing that it may well provide the solution for a life-and-death problem; may within a few decades make the British Isles independent of American cotton. But that will only come to pass if the mighty river be cabined, cribbed, and confined within the clay prison of the dams; be bound in fetters behind the iron sluice-gates; be coerced by the logic of square roots and logarithms out of whose mysteries the modern sorcerer weaves a spell that brings riches and happiness to the nations.

And yet, while it is certain that England will never voluntarily surrender the Sudan (of which for some years now she has been the effective owner), it is equally certain that, having an eye to her own advantage in Egypt, she will never allow the land of the lower Nile to die of thirst. All the same, she may find it convenient, now and again, to be niggardly; may dole out only so much water as the political exigencies of the time render advisable until outraged Europe rises in revolt. For Europe really has a conscience, a heart whose beating only those deafened by the recent clamour of the guns can fail to hear. The League of Nations will see to it that the Egyptians are not denied the oldest of all civil rights, the right to a sufficiency of water.

Why does not England supply all the funds needed for the building of the new dam, which is such a terror to the Egyptians? It is not the way of the British to

put up the money when, occupying a foreign land, they undertake great engineering works in their own interest. How long can they count on undisturbed possession of this new fragment of their colonial empire? Since 1920, can any of the great powers, even this past master in the art of quiet annexation, feel quite at ease as to the likelihood of permanent overlordship where alien nationalities are concerned? Does any one believe, nowadays, that the coloured races can be kept in a state of vassalage for ever? Their revolt cannot be stifled.

It is a generation since England conquered the Sudan. Gordon's death and Kitchener's victories saved Egypt from the Mahdi. In return for this boon, England secured a moiety of power in the "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan," a half which meant the whole, "condominium" being a euphemism like the "joint control" exercised by a Whitley Council of employers and employed. Will any one venture to speak of gratitude due from the Egyptians? "To build upon gratitude is always a doubtful expedient, and when nations are in question it is positively dangerous," said Bismarck to Wimpffen, the evening after the battle of Sedan. Besides, why should we expect gratitude when a great and youthful nation, wishing to make money out of discoveries in the science and practice of technique, places these at the disposal of an ancient nation which was great in times long past? I am not forgetting that under Lord Cromer's regime the long-standing national debt of Egypt was paid off; that, thanks to the British regulation of the flow of the Nile,

the country secured millions upon millions of surplus revenue; and that, in the Delta alone, within a very few years the annual value of the cotton crop rose from six to eighteen million pounds sterling.

Egypt is England's brown inamorata, royally entertained, decked out in fine clothes, loaded with jewels; and gently robbed of freedom and independence. She is in a gilded cage, whose door is kept shut and barred. Flirtation is out of the question, for the lady may not even speak to any one but her keeper unless under strict supervision. Made rich by England, Egypt lies in chains. During the war, this "neutral State" had to supply countless men to turn shells and build roads for the Entente, with the result that a vague hostility for the sometime suzerain lords in Stamboul, was quickly replaced by a defiant attitude towards London and a sentimental affection for the Turks as brethren in the faith of Islam. The building of textile factories in Egypt has been discouraged, for it suits the English better that the Egyptians should buy back their own cotton in the form of piece-goods woven on British looms. Furthermore, though in classical days Egypt was the granary of Rome, she must now import corn through the agency of British merchants, for in the fields cotton has to a large extent ousted wheat. Thousands of British officials, engaged in the task of refashioning Egyptian administration, have for forty years been drawing salaries thrice as large as those paid to Egyptians doing the same work; and now, when their task is done, they demand preposterous compensation in lieu of further service.

For go they must! Wilson's slogan concerning the right of all peoples to self-determination, this utterance of a prophetic spirit, wreaks vengeance even on those who summoned the formula to their aid. The magician's apprentices, having called the New World in to help them against the eldest part of the Old, cannot escape the wind of the ideal which filled the sails of the ships that bore the victorious troops eastward across the Atlantic. Why should the ascent of the dark-skinned races be nothing more than a pretty dream? Why should people, merely because their skins are of a hue once natural to all mankind, lack the freedoms which even the most submissive among the whites have at long last wrested from the powers that be? Why should three hundred millions of Indians and Egyptians, the offspring of most venerable civilisations, continue to abase themselves before a sprinkling of Europeans, who have drawn so large a share of their own culture from the East, and have brought the East nothing but the artifices and the quickened tempo of western technique? Though the equalisation of the classes is not making much headway, the equalisation of the races would seem to be one of the most salient consequences of the war. The revolt of the dark-skinned peoples is in being.

Not yet, however, is it the expression of the force that builds States. The shrewder heads among the Egyptians are aware of this. When, two years after the signing of the treaties, the last British engineer has quitted the Assouan dam, it is unlikely that they will entrust the complicated machinery to members of their own race, though these have won diplomas at Oxford

and Charlottenburg. They will summon Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians to fill the vacant posts, for they do not blink the fact that order, hygiene, and thrift would have a poor chance of survival under native management. The rights and freedoms which the spirit of the age has granted them are not balanced by skill and experience.

VI

How amazing this land of Egypt is becomes even plainer to us when we contemplate it from the window of a railway carriage in motion. Perhaps that is because nowadays, being used to the cinema, we find that moving pictures have more significance for us than still life. If we search for a deeper reason, we may fancy that (living as we do in the "century of speed," the century which has therefore given birth to the film) we have lost the power of enjoying quiet observation.

Our first encounter with this mighty river resembles our first encounter with a great man; we study its tremendous works, we see its Delta. Then, as we proceed upstream, we trace the course of its development. At length we reach the source — though I do not go all this way on my present journey. It was when traversing Africa westward from the sea, in earlier days, that I saw the sources of the Nile. Now, from the window of the moving train, I can study how the river has made and has imposed limits upon everything in Egypt, the ordering of the Egyptian people not excepted; how the magic of length without breadth enforces peculiarities of rhythm and colour upon the whole life of the country.

The window must be open. If we raise the glass, which is specially tinted to suit the sensitiveness of the European retina, everything has a monotonous greyish hue. How closely things are packed into this strip of land, huddled, superposed. On the roofs of the mud-walled cottages in the villages lies manure fermenting in heaps. Before sunrise, while the inmates of the huts are still sleeping below, fowls and ducks overhead are scratching the muck in search of food. The brown folk and their farm stock live upon terms of closest intimacy.

The clay of which these wattle-and-dab villages are built, is nothing more than slime from the Nile; the river thus linking on its banks man with man, habitation with habitation. Two women, Niobids draped in black, baskets on heads, are driving their geese across some sandy rubble. They look exactly like those who, on the tombs of the kings, are figured driving their offerings to the sacrifice. Next I catch sight of four or five donkeys, greyish-white, galloping swiftly, alone. How strange they look, as they make a burlesque entry into the village to which they belong, through a huge gate flanked by mud-huts, a gate which has been standing for three thousand years. There is an ox with Apis markings, white-limbed, trampling the brown-black earth, drawing the antediluvian wooden plough behind which walks a long-skirted fellah. Dignified of mien, some elders, wearing indigo-blue robes, emerge from a group of date-palms that lift their heads, as if in acclamation, above the grey walls. A man chewing a piece of sugar-cane rides slowly past, seated on a white camel. Beneath the sycamores, two lads are praying,

their hands over their ears. In a noisy little motor-car, some white-turbaned natives, garments flapping in the wind, race the train, shouting in their excitement.

Since all this movement takes place upon the little dams which separate the canals (no matter whether these are full or almost empty), it seems more plastic in Egypt than elsewhere. In the clear, untempered light of an arid land everything that rises above the long strip of verdure stands out sharply against the blue — an entrancing wealth of forms, a school of schools for the young painter! As background for all, we have the fields, intensely green. The cotton stalks from the most recent harvest are still standing, now at Christmas, with stray white flocks hanging here and there. That reed-like growth yonder is sugar-cane. There are huge cauliflowers which would make a northern housewife think she must be dreaming. The wheat and the rice are barely above ground.

Darkness is at hand. Riding, driving, or afoot, all move down towards the river. Every square inch of irrigated land is precious, so most of the villages lie along the edge of the desert, beside the burial grounds — harvesting is more important than the sleep of the living or the long, long rest of the dead! Many of the beasts, therefore, are driven Nileward every evening to be watered, the peasant who drives them crossing half Egypt for the purpose. Gliding over the surface of the river are long, pointed sails, white or yellow; just like those seen in the sepulchral frescoes at Sakkara, the sails of the boats that escort the sun-god Re, on his voyage across the heavenly flood. Sails abound, for the

Nile is the chief means of communication. You cross its waters in a sailing-boat; when you land on the marshy bank, you are unceremoniously lifted in four strong arms and carried to the firm ground where the donkeys are waiting. Then you ride once more across the green fields till you come back to the ochre-tinted waste.

Green is Egypt's colour; and the traveller in Egypt soon comes to realise why green signifies hope. Nomads in the wilderness are ever on the look-out for a green oasis; green was the delight of Arabian poets, the ground-tint of the meadows depicted in Arabian carpets; green was and is the colour of the Prophet. Flags were a perilous discovery, and flag-waving is out-of-date; yet, sceptic though I am in these matters, I must confess that to me no flag seems more lovely than the green flag of Mecca.

Green beyond compare are the lawns fronting the white hotels on the upper Nile, the lawns of the gardens made by French and English hands; soothing and restful to the weary traveller's nerves. He must be content to look at them, must not walk on this fine grass, for it is rooted in soft Nile mud, and will likely enough pluck the shoes from off his feet. Phœnix palms grow here and there, significant in their isolation, like art-treasures in the mansions of the great; white lawn-tennis grounds, white-drill suits, the white robes of the Nubian servants, long chairs of white cane; white pleasure palaces that shelter luxuriously tended guests in a place that rejoices in the seductive name of Luxor — even in these haunts of an over-civilized decadence the

impression is one of superabundant fertility and exuberant growth.

Birds are ever on the wing above the slender band of green we call Egypt; they throng in the air that surmounts the narrow riverine land. Here is the hoopoe, which at home I have never had a chance of examining at my leisure, quite tame, so that one might almost seize his curly crest. The wagtail, splashing in pools by the river's edge, hops leisurely aside to avoid the camel's heavy pad. The ibis, white flashed with silver blue, is still a sacred bird, for you may not shoot it. Herons, white and grey, stand philosophically in the flooded fields. Wild pigeons fly in hundreds from the dark sycamores to the strange-looking tower built of clay by the peasants, after the model of the towers of an ancient temple gate.

High over all soars, and cries, the falcon.

VII

Hedaya, the hen-harrier, the blue hawk with a light-brown sheen, circles unceasingly above the Nile, flying so low, at times, that the red of the belly feathers can be plainly discerned. The falcon, known here as Shahoun, has a cry that is even louder than Hedaya's. Both are loud enough to drown the whine of the patient water-wheel. Night, when all voices are hushed, is short. Throughout the waking hours, the cry of the two hawks, so characteristic of Egypt, is heard over the river.

Shahoun the falcon was once known by the name of Horus — to whom the modern freemasons still pay honour as a symbol. Just as I see him now flying aloft,

A VILLAGE ON THE NILE

light-brown and red, so is he depicted on guard in the tombs of the kings; rudely painted on these gloomy walls, but more agreeable to look at than the pictures of the gods, which drive me forth into the sunshine. In the hideous imagery of these catacombs, the uneasy visitor from a far country is confronted with ape-men driving hippopotamuses harnessed to their chariots; conquered kings stand at ease beside their severed heads (as Othello once described them to Desdemona); on all hands, emperordom wantons in its self-glorifying madness, celebrating its triumphs. The gods we see are not lower animals made godlike, but merely brute beasts fortuitously equipped with divine strength. A dung-beetle rolls the sun forward on its course; and American women reverently stick these quaint emblems in the bosoms of their gowns!

For my own part, I can feel no reverence here, in the tombs of the Pharaohs. I can only laugh contemptuously at the mentality of a king who in his lifetime fancied himself able to cheat death by this Neronic equipment of his mausoleum. One familiar with the thought of death, cannot but feel unsympathetic towards the vestiges of the faith of those who tried, by embalming corpses, to persuade themselves into the belief that they would thus inherit eternal life.

Not here alone does the unsophisticated traveller find himself full of invincible hostility towards this ancient Egyptian culture. A like sentiment masters him in the shadow of the huge pillars of Ammon, hard by the stream; it seizes him once more when he contemplates the ungainly figures of Ramses; it returns

ever and again during meditative hours in the museums. Greek plastic art, on the other hand, arousing in its statuary, its temples, and the thoughts it conveys, a sense of the nearness of Plato, arouses also an impression of contemporary kinship, of modernity of standards. But in Egypt, too, there are human touches. The loving queen on Tutankhamen's throne; the Anacreontic cheerfulness of the viceroy's tomb at Sakkara; the gold hangings on which cranes and lions and gazelles alternate with bells and grape-clusters, almost as fine as those chiselled upon the goblets and the dagger-hilts of Crete — these rare delights must compensate for the preponderant moments in which horror or a sense of the ridiculous is aroused by the monstrosities that portray the foolish cunning of a dead creed, when examined by one who is resolutely uninterested in academic erudition.

Enough! I am content to exorcise the grotesquerie of these mummies which have at length been disinterred from their triple-coffined resting-places, and must face daylight in the glass cases of modern museums, while donkey-boys peddle the fingers (stolen or counterfeit) of their illustrious corpses. Time's revenges! The bleached and unburied bones of a camel in the desert impress me more than these futile vestiges of royal greatness; the relics of kings who sought a false eternity for themselves, instead of thinking of the welfare of their peoples.

At Philae, the traveller is faced with a parable of our time, and must take a side in the duel between use and beauty. The ruins of a temple built towards the close of the pre-Christian era had stood here peacefully for

two thousand years, on an island in the Nile. The building of the Assouan dam transformed the whole region into a reservoir, and every winter, when the level of the river rises sixty feet and more, the pillars of the temple are submerged. The yellow sandstone is losing its fine colour, and already after twenty years the splendour of the painted capitals has vanished. When the dam was built, the guardians of the beautiful cried haro. They raised a like clamour when the tower of Rheims cathedral was in danger of destruction because it stood in the way of millions of doomed men engaged in a struggle to the death.

If you row towards the island, half an hour above the dam, you can, from the middle of the broad river, contemplate both the mighty works in turn. Looking southward upstream, when the water is low, you will see the colonnades of Isis and the habitations of Osiris rising above the confusion of rocks and islets. Glancing downstream you will see the titanic masonry of the embankment, which blocks your gaze northward, just as it blocks the flow of the river. Yes, it is thanks to the building of yonder huge wall, that the pillars at Philae have turned grey; thanks to this, the peacock glories of the capitals have been washed off; thanks to this, within a few decades, the ever-renewed assaults of the rushing water will inevitably bring the whole structure of the temple to the ground. That is the price which must be paid for the dam.

Is it too high? What concern of ours are the pillars at Philae? Has Osiris any rôle in contemporary art? Among the living elements of our minds, can you find

a place for the sacred beetle? Surely it need not lessen respect for the technical achievements of our epoch, that they are all measurable by one and the same standard. Not long ago, when voyaging in the Mediterranean, I heard by wireless a Spaniard in Madrid playing Bach's 'cello sonata, and my sense of awe almost overpowered my delight. Where technical advances that minister to the expansion of productive life are at war with beauty, beauty cannot maintain its primacy unless it be unique, irreplaceable, for ever exemplary.

What are the wonders of Egypt? Not the great sugarloaf hats at Ghizeh, not these pyramids toilsomely erected in the course of decades by hundreds of thousands of slaves, dripping sweat and blood that a Cheops might enjoy the smuggled semblance of immortality; not the kings' tombs, poor for all their richness, with their grotesque frescoes, their beast-gods painted or carved in stone; not the strength of the pillars of Ammon, nor the immensity of the colossal statues, nor even the fanciful beauties of Arab mosques and gardens and palaces. None of these are unique. The Nile has that supreme quality of uniqueness: the river which, after it has arisen in the equatorial lakes and the Abyssinian alps, has by God's whim been sent forth into the desert; has there become the father of a country; and has at length, tamed after many millenniums by man's skill, been endowed with new creative force.

Sunlight and Moonlight at Ghizeh

It does not seem paradoxical to drive past the pyramid of Cheops in a 50-horse-power car. The modern

who does so is but imitating King Cheops's own style. This monarch of long ago wanted to break the record in pyramid building. Herodotus, who penned a sort of Baedeker's guide to Egypt, raises his hands in wonder at the numerical items he records. He tells us that Cheops could only build his mausoleum thanks to a reign of thirty years, vast wealth, and the ownership of a hundred thousand slaves; that sixteen hundred talents were disbursed merely to provide radishes, garlic, and onions for the workers. He goes on to luxuriate in millions, to riot in descriptions of the abundance of lifting machines — his sound instinct making him aware that this great work was great, not because it was beautiful or splendidly conceived, but only because it was of record size.

For note well that Chephren, who wanted to vie with his predecessor even in the tomb, constructed a pyramid which was lower than Cheops's by twenty-seven inches and a half. The great pyramid out-topped even St. Peter's in Rome, even the cathedrals in Strasburg and Vienna — was the tallest building in the world until Monsieur Eiffel suddenly more than doubled the record by building his iron tower in Paris.

From a distance, these edifices look as if they were made of papier mâché, just as do the mountains of the Engadine seen through an air no less pure; they are light grey, dusty in the sunshine. The desert atmosphere is deceptive, and when we are approaching an object we can never tell how near it may be. Suddenly, we are there; suddenly, the sugarloaf hat has shrunk to become quite small. Now everything is of a burning

yellow tint. When we have climbed a few tiers of the pyramid, the vivid green of the watered plain leaps into sight, and the river seems almost within reach of the outstretched hand. Nevertheless, we are in the desert, to whose marge the dead have retired.

It is three in the afternoon. The shadows are lengthening. That of the second pyramid falls on the first, greatly intensifying the eeriness of the impression. Venerable Arabs, whose bronzed faces a white stubble of beard powders as with sugar, sell tickets; for these mighty kings are subject to a tax which they would fain have imposed upon the fellaheen. The social inanity of the Pharaohs! Having a craze for immortality, they made body and tomb and statue perennial, and wasted half the resources of their people for a generation in the endeavour to rival the gods. To-day nothing of them remains but these pretentious structures of stone, these mountainous sepulchres, from one of which to the other I wander.

Standing between them, I could fancy myself in a mountain pass. Are we not climbing towards the summits, having, on our way thither, already reached the col? Yet the slope of the plain to this point is almost imperceptible. Like the peaks to right and to left of a pass, the points of the pyramids tower into the blue of the tropical afternoon.

Like the wind in a pass, too, blows the breeze between the steeply rising stone sides. We see everything in silhouette. Far off, in the southern haze, are more pyramids. They seem to tell us that the desert harbours an unending succession of such tombs, mile-

stones of the landscape as they are milestones in history. I should hesitate to describe as ruins the plates and cubes of wrought stone that litter the ground hereabouts; they are surely in their natural surroundings, transitional between the hillocks of sand and the pyramids. Shyly and thoughtfully, I pace along, round these angular monsters, and, of a sudden, catch a back view of the Sphinx.

She rests on the declivity, as if on guard, in a line with the gateway of the farther pyramid. At this hour the sun, low in the west, is behind the observer. Thus the Sphinx first becomes visible as a great shadow picture, perfectly in repose.

The sharply cut silhouette was almost terrifying in this vast solitude. As yet I could not see her face, scarcely her outline, little more than her shadow. At eventide, in the yellow immensity, nothing shows but the lonely black shadow, the head of the Sphinx. Athrill with expectation I stride up to the crouching body, half buried in the sand, the body that is nothing more than a huge piece of flattened stone. I stride past what seems a senseless colossus, and marvel at the monster's length. Then I stand before the head and turn to gaze.

Studying the carven face, I discern — composure.

Watchful like a giant, a servitor in an ante-room, is the lion-bodied creature, full of tranquil strength, confident of her own powers, sure she is strong enough to slay her master. Did not the living man, the son, come here from time to time, to visit his father's great monument? Would he have ventured to walk in front of the beast,

that was neither able nor willing to turn? I cannot rid myself of the feeling that the Sphinx is but petrified, after all; that she came here of her own accord, long ago; crouched here voluntarily, gazing towards the dawn, the night in her rear; that, though lifeless, she yet lives.

The expression on the Sphinx's face, thus fixed in changeless stone, continues to stir the beholder; and the effect is intensified by the streaks of dark lilac that course over forehead, cheeks, and chin. The wide mouth is full of meaning, the lower lip misanthropically drawn down. The eyes, on the other hand, widely opened, form a mystical counterpoise. They are set far apart. The general aspect is not one either of intelligence or cunning, but of simple amazement. Tattered elephantine ears project from the head of stone. From the neck, the strata of sedimentary rock out of which the figure was hewn, fall away in lines. In a tree, such "rings" indicate years; in a woman's neck, decades; here, geological epochs. Contemplating the Sphinx, we forget the art with which the form has been shaped; all seems to be the work of nature's cunning hand. Again and again we are filled with wonder that a head hewn at one end of a mass of stone, with a mere sketch of a body, can convey the impression of a couchant lioness. For this colossus is wholly feminine. The archæologists, indeed, assure us that the Sphinx is a "he"; and there are no traces of breasts in the carven figure, so that at most the wealth of hair can be said to be feminine. No matter for that. We feel, looking at the whole, that the recumbent beast is not a lion but a lioness!

Wishing to see the sun sink below the desert horizon, I let myself be persuaded into climbing the great pyramid. But the shouting, the pushing and pulling, and the crazy jargon of the Arabs, as they scrambled up even these giant steps in their long robes, dispelled the glamour of the scene. When, after much labour, I reached the top, their bravoes did not ring true; and the hocus-pocus of a buffoon among them who played the prophet, was a vexation to my spirit.

Suddenly the whole scene changed.

Two of the four guides spread their crumpled squares of prayer-cloth. Turning their backs upon the dull-red tints in the western sky, facing eastward towards the Holy City and the full moon now rising in all its purity, they kneeled devoutly. While the two others continued to chaffer and to chatter, they began to recite the last of the five daily prayers. Again and again came the name of Allah, the liquid "l's" pouring softly from their fervent lips; their bodies moved in the rhythmical prostrations of the praying Oriental, arms half raised and heads reverently lowered; they felt the near presence of God, in direct communion with them, far from temples and all the apparatus of sophisticated worship; two poor Bedouins watering the arid waste with the bountiful stream of their faith.

Too late we realised that night had fallen with tropical swiftness, and that in a few fleeting moments the moon had become supreme. The descent, perilous, vertiginous, beshadowed, had all the excitements that await one who is benighted in the Alps. When, after a hot and toilsome hour during which thoughts of sudden death wrestled

with thoughts of God, we reached the desert sands once more, the silhouettes had become instinct with the mystery of night. What in the sunshine had been no more than wonderful, was now fraught with sublimity, thanks to the magic of moonlight and the glory of Allah's name.

More than ever gigantic were the artificial mountains against the background of the night-sky. When we got back to the Sphinx, the mingling of nature and art which had called forth this figure from the rock was forgotten. There was nothing to be seen but a couchant lioness, come down out of the prime to guard the mausoleums. Silent, menacing, she lay at the edge of the desert, looking through human eyes into immeasurable distances. Above her shone Lyra.

Though the nose is wanting, this cruel mutilation does not arouse the sense of compassion we are apt to feel when we contemplate a headless torso. Her aspect in the moonlight is intensely spiritual. Mightier is she than Alexander or Caesar or Napoleon (who all in turn stood before her); for she renounces the symbols of power as she renounces those of beauty, and is coalescent with mother earth. She springs from the duality of sand and sky; and the stars above her, rising and setting with the revolutions of the firmament, appear more mutable, more perishable, than her form, at one with the desert, and, like the desert, unchangeable. Above her shone Lyra, my constellation!

The voices of the departing Bedouins faded away in the distance. Close at hand a light shone from a neighbouring cottage, an outlier from the village nearest to

the Sphinx. A tall man, stepping forth from the shadow of the great pyramid, came up to us, and offered, in broken English, to guide us to the road. He was wearing a white gandora, had black hands and white fingernails. His kindly eyes and inviting gestures were in his favour. To repel his advances was out of the question. Yet who could tell what weapons might be concealed under his robe? When he reached for my hand, to lead me on my way, my blood ran cold. For the second time in an hour, I was in mortal danger. Noticing that I drew back, he said gently: "Like a friend."

Once again was Western scepticism vanquished by the power of Eastern faith. I was familiar with the Arab way of sauntering hand in hand through the streets. This custom bespeaks a mutual trust that is perfectly compatible with craftiness, with irritability, and even with a vindictive spirit. Here was an instance of child-like simplicity, which was no less real because the man was all the time reckoning up the piastres he hoped to earn. Kings are conquerors, and are also unashamedly willing to let their subjects pay the shot for them. Cheops derived his vast wealth from the robbery of slaves who honoured him as a god; and upon their sweating backs he built himself a megalomaniac's tomb. Mahmed Ali, guiding a belated foreigner through the moonlight in order to earn the price of a loaf of bread, did so with the manners of a prince speeding a distinguished guest at parting. Assuredly he harboured no envy in his mind as he stood watching our car bearing us off through the night towards the wicked city of Cairo.

The Key of Life

Two bird-headed gods are emptying vases over the king's head. Long chains of key-shaped emblems are streaming down over him. He seems to enjoy the douche. Similar keys are carried by every representation of him graven on the walls of the subterranean mausoleum. Whenever he encounters a spirit, this latter must shoot a key at him, as if it were an arrow or a spark. Indeed, I have seen one of these kings depicted as having Horus and Osiris stretching out hands towards him; each of the gods was holding a key, these keys being symmetrically disposed.

The megalomaniacs who ruled Egypt wanted to live, wanted to live for ever. What else was there left to wish for? True, they were ungentle with one another in the intimacies of family life; the wife-sister (they followed the example of their gods in this little matter of incest) poisoning or mutilating the husband-brother. In the temples hundreds of gaps, where faces should be, bear witness to the iconoclastic zeal of successive conquering dynasties. But every ruler's primary aim was, not so much to safeguard his realm, nor so much to ensure the succession, as to build for himself a tomb in which the everlasting life of the body could be guaranteed. On the inner walls of this tomb, his likeness was to be multiplied innumerable times; hammered, so to say, into the minds of the gods, with all the tedious iteration of a twentieth-century advertisement.

Egypt might serve as the school for kings; or, since the day of kings is passing, as the school for dictators.

TWO PYRAMIDS

They might learn, here, how absurd the externals of power look, after a man is dead; how an inner tranquillity triumphs over the grave. Were it only because the ancient Egyptians carried this primitive craving for life with them even into the tomb, clinging thus eagerly to corporeality, persons with a Platonising temperament can have but little sympathy with Egyptian theology, and consequently with Egyptian culture as a whole. Nowhere is the perishability of the flesh more obvious than in this land where the most elaborate devices for its immortalisation find appropriate harbourage in that parody of immortality — the museum.

With reluctance we quit the comfortingly fertile strip of land beside the Nile, when the patient donkeys make the first step into the desert. Rocky hills, yellowish pink in colour, of friable sandstone, more stone than sand, thrust jaggedly into the pale blue of the morning sky. We are on a road of sorts; a trackway which speedily narrows. The sun blazes down, and the landscape shimmers in the heat. Our sun-hats are heavy as lead; the donkey-boys run after us in silence; the donkeys no longer bray; as the hills draw nearer, their yellow tint grows more vivid, like that of flame. Loneliness, which is wont to seek cool and shady places, is here intensified by the heat, and becomes almost terrifying. The sandstone rocks take on curved and pointed shapes that are strange, Dantesque; the hills threaten to fall on the intruder and crush him; the parching wind of the desert begins to blow. We are surely on death's highroad.

Voices, at length! Tents, soldiers, Nubians, a dozen

men, stationed beside tall doorless doorways cut in the rock, the guardians of a repose which, after the passage of millenniums, has at length been disturbed. To this spot, westward from the river, the kings of Thebes, wanting a retired nook for their mortuary chambers, had fled. They hoped that, in the desert refuge, their tombs would be safe from being rifled; but they escaped the robber, only to fall into the hands of the folk-lore enthusiast. Such has been the irony of fate. The inquisitiveness of anthropologists living a hundred generations later has outstripped the greed of gold-hunting marauders. These Ramses kings, whose numbers run so glibly off the tongues of amateur Egyptologists making the grand tour, have been renumbered in accordance with a new system, or no system at all. For, at the entrance of each of these fifty or sixty tombs you will find a number. Here the dynasties are tumbled together pell-mell; their hates are forgotten, victories and defeats are reduced to a common level; the last vestiges of power have disappeared; no longer do the Pharaohs count in history except as names; over their heads stand triumphant pundits demonstrating to bored globe-trotters the "wonders of ancient Egypt."

Or rather, over the spots where their heads used to lie. The bodies have been removed, and curiosity alone brings visitors to the vacant tombs. The way in is by a steep descent. For light, there are incandescent electric lamps, instead of the flickering torches which, held in unsteady hands, dimly dispel the darkness within the pyramids. Here one can study the interiors at ease; examine the pillared passages and chambers; scrutinise

the reliefs and the frescoes in which these kings (of the second millennium, most of them, and therefore pre-Homeric) sang their own praises. We see them as giants before whom conquered enemies of Lilliputian size are paraded; the vanquished, though decapitated, carry their heads with them in good order. The kings are likewise depicted, by anticipation, in their coffins, being slid down the incline into the last resting-place. Always, however, these monarchs are saved and protected by the key of life, held out to them by the gods.

Grotesque gods, resembling those of certain negro tribes! I do not trouble to learn by heart friend Baedeker's account of the significance of the ibis-headed, eagle-headed, bull-headed Ammons and other marvels. For me the thirty dynasties of which travellers in this part of the world prattle between mouthfuls of lunch, are of no more interest than the like number of German princely houses. I am glad that I cannot decipher the hieroglyphs; and I continue to stare open-mouthed at the obelisks, able, in my ignorance, to fashion my own profound interpretations of their mysterious inscriptions.

Below ground, in these sepulchral vaults, Dante is our guide. We see files of men promenading the underworld; negroes are placed topsy-turvy in the sunshine; Ammon, with a ram's head, is being worshipped by monkeys; the sacred beetle is rolling the sun round its course. Among all these absurdities, we come unawares upon the goddess of night, lovely of aspect, impassioned, looking sadly and eagerly at the king. Now the electric light pales rhythmically (can it be because the wires up

above there are being shaken by the desert wind?), giving the scene a twilit aspect, as if played on a stage that is neither in the world of the living nor in the world of the dead, but betwixt and between.

In the remotest, the deepest, of these tombs the last chamber was in darkness. We expected to see the great stone sarcophagus, which is usually left in place, while the inner coffin and the mummy it contains are sent to Cairo. The black hand of our guide felt for a switch; there was a click, and behold, at our feet (faintly lighted by a low-power lamp) lay the sculptured form of the king, huge and still upon the stone coffin. The splendid simplicity of Egyptian portraiture, of the style which models human heads as lotus flowers and lotus flowers as pillars, enabled us to ignore the farce of the mural carvings, as we concentrated our gaze upon this fine piece of statuary, beneath which till recently had lain the mummy of the same worthy — a mouldering caricature.

When we got back to the river, how full of life and activity was the landscape! The dark-skinned folk, men, women, and children (men mostly on donkeyback, by twos or even threes at a time, while women and children went afoot), were thronging to the ferry. This is market-day in Luxor, and the pigeons they bring hidden among their rags will buy them new garments. Fifty backs are bowed above the sheaves of the recently cut maize; a hundred are bent over the little canals which irrigate the cane-fields, now being harvested; camels, almost hidden beneath their loads, are swaying as they walk sedately towards the light railway that leads from

the plantation to the sugar-boiling factory. There is movement everywhere — oxen, youngsters, yellow dogs.

One and all, they bear with them the key of life, the key which Pharaoh, in vain endeavour, had conjured into his mausoleum.

Temples Old and New

The peace of morning reigns in the hotel garden!

One uses the place. Were it not for the order and safety guaranteed by the white invaders, one could only travel with a retinue of Arabs. Besides, much as a man of my temperament likes to get off the beaten track, here it is out of the question, in a world where dirt and poverty rub elbows with the luxury of the great caravanserais of the West — just as, in the Nile valley, the desert is everywhere but a stone's-throw from the green fields. White men's heads have thought out all that dark-skinned men's hands have carried into effect; and the wealthy Egyptians feel more akin to us westerners than to their own blood-brothers. Such is the law of the classes in the land of the Nile.

For my part, I feel closer ties of sympathy with the men of colour than with many members of the dominant race who sit in state at adjoining tables. The underlings are unsophisticated, trustworthy, kind-hearted — for all that their skins are dark. During these weeks in Egypt, I have watched so many brown or black hands — feminine of gesture — ministering to my wants, raised in prayer, stretched out for baksheesh. How noiselessly move the shapely, naked feet. When, in the resplendent dining-rooms, I watch the head-waiter

marshalling the white-coated boys; when I see them deftly at work, handing round plates, filling finger-bowls, pouring out wine, brushing away breadcrumbs; always quietly, always with the prompt and good-tempered obedience of well-trained animals — then I wonder what thoughts are hidden behind these tranquil masks, I wonder whether they regard us with contempt.

Luxor and Assouan are utterly different. Luxor is a showy, spoiled blonde; rather stolid; elegant and self-possessed. Assouan is a brunette; paradoxical and somewhat eccentric. They represent different climates. Though neither of them enjoys the perpetuity of blue skies promised in the prospectus (for, in truth, cool evenings and cloudy noons provide an agreeable change from time to time), Assouan, far to the south, is in the middle of the desert and close to the tropic of Cancer. Almost ludicrous is the way in which the wilderness, granite-besprinkled, borders upon the garden where roses bloom in profusion, the garden which the hotel company, with the aid of a liberal application of Nile mud, has as if by magic superposed upon the arid soil.

Luxor, on the other hand, in the midmost region of the fertile valley, endowed with an equable sweetness which reminds us of the Riviera, has in the great Winter Palace created a beautiful white pleasure-castle which amazes us in such a situation — amazes us more than the Hotel Taj Mahal in Bombay and the Souvretta in Engadine (the two finest hotels I know). Each of the latter can draw upon the resources of a vast hinterland for all the things which at Luxor must toilsomely be brought from afar. Long has been the story before it

has become possible for the guest to listen to the soft whirr of the lawn-mower as it does its work under the guidance of brown hands; to slake his thirst with water from a Bohemian spa; to make merry, among the palms in the great hall, beside a Christmas-tree from the Swiss mountains, as gaily decorated as any he could see in his own land.

The railway trains in Egypt are as luxurious as our own expresses, and we travel through the desert no less commodiously than if we were in a modern air-liner. Perhaps we lose something by all this sophistication, but we certainly gain time; and even the "noble ennui" (I use Madam de Staël's phrase) characteristic of hotels wherever we go, becomes tolerable in such a climate. In these palatial halls, it seems equally natural that people should be ceremoniously silent, and that they should celebrate American dance-bacchanals — for the hotel is the last universal temple known to Europe, is a general rallying-place.

Studying the Arabs on my sixth oriental journey, I am inspired with a growing fondness for this people, which is so devout, and of so ancient a civilisation, that no one has any right to force upon it a new culture or a new creed. Perhaps the Egyptians are shrewder than the Arabs, but they are not therefore less proud. Besides, who can venture to distinguish races in such a medley, where God's palette is smeared with the whole gamut of colours from the lightest of browns to the deepest of blacks, symbolising therewith the manifold possibilities of human character? The natives are quick to recognize the overbearing type of white

traveller, the man to whom the East offers a welcome opportunity for the exercise of a lust to dominate which he has had to repress at home. The only thing they reverence in the whites is true worth. What gifts, indeed, has Europe brought to Egypt? Soap and motor-cars — as emblems of all the rest. The last-named, the autos, are the most welcome, and are used with immense zest.

Nowhere else can the European find so many opportunities for the daily practice of a genuine socialism, by which I mean warmth of heart. But in this domain the white visitor must learn many things. The European must learn that it is just as unseemly to interrupt a shoeblack practising his craft, as to interrupt a poet writing verses; that, if he engages a porter, he must not carry anything himself, lest he put the man to shame; that one must bargain before buying, but must not offer prices that are out of all reason; that an orange in the desert is worth twice as much as in Luxor, only a league away. He must remember that in the East time is not money, that the man of colour is content to wait his convenience, just as of yore among our own people the underling was content to abide the coming or going of his lord; and he must realise the existence of a community sense among those who serve him which makes them uneasy should any one of them be singled out for exceptional reward. At the entrance to the rock temple of Thebes, the traveller is greeted by the goddess of justice, ostrich plume on head, and green pinions widespread. To-day, after three thousand years, she is still the patron saint of the poor Egyptian.

To the wealthy Egyptian, the foregoing remarks do not apply. He is a Levantine, endowed with all the qualities (good and bad alike) of the Mediterranean trade. As a politician, he thinks rather of personal advantage than of the welfare of his country. Thus will it remain in Egypt so long as men of his ilk are in political control. Beside the Nile, as everywhere else in the world, it is rather among the have-nots than among the haves that we must look, if we are in search of the sources of spiritual progress.

Egypt, the land without transitional stages, the land where the desert passes abruptly into the exuberantly fertile strip of country watered by the Nile, is likewise the home of the most glaring social contrasts. Where the waters of the Delta are held up, at the Nile barrage below Cairo, at this spot notable alike for the ingenuities of its hydrostatic technique and for the splendour of its gardens, masters and servants are intermingled in motley fashion, though without friction. In white houses built in the tropical style, amid the patches of undulating greensward that intersperse the flamboyant gardens where horticulture has excelled itself, dwell the British engineers with their womenkind, moving quietly to and fro at business and at pleasure, with a nonchalant and well-bred assumption of superiority, what time the coloured folk who serve them seem born to live and die in a lower station. The lords of the world are engaged in sedate activities, and, at the helm of the great river, direct the labours of the natives, for the general welfare of Egypt. Such is the accepted theory.

At the point of this Delta island, a white barrack-like

structure rears its head crudely into the sky. Drawing near, we see black and misshapen figures. They are prisoners, for this is the penitentiary. Clad in blue, with shaven heads, chains clanking at their feet, they till the fields. The soldiers who keep guard over them are dark-skinned too. But the governor of the prison (doubt it not) is as white as the house in which he lives. While we watch the prisoners, so close to the lovely gardens and laughing women and smartly dressed cavaliers, beneath the same blue sky, on the same island watered by the same stream, we have forced upon our attention the problem which, not here alone, but throughout Africa, has become so urgent during the twentieth century. We understand how difficult it will be to fulfil the demand of our epoch that full human rights shall be granted to these coloured folk — to reconcile with their manifold incapacities their determination to be masters in their own houses.

The vestiges of ancient days rise mutely out of the sand or the verdure. They crop up suddenly, with the abruptness characteristic of everything in Egypt, these pylons and pillars, these colossuses and sphinxes. They seem out of place and unmeaning amid the new mansions of the rulers and the squalid villages of the agriculturists; grotesque in their situation and their titanic size, as also in their general state of dilapidation. Yet a sapient attempt at restoration would but falsify the impression. To be a ruin is the work of destiny, is a fate not lightly to be disregarded, is something strong enough to denote a new form. Little of what has come down to us conveys a true picture of the antique world.

PILLARS ON THE NILE BANK

Ruins speak a language of their own, an obscure one, whose obscurity is intensified by the contrasted living environment of to-day.

Look at this black-draped Niobid, this Nubian woman driving her four-footed charges across the ruins; at the smart yellow carriage, roofed, but open at the sides in accordance with the prevailing fashion, rolling smoothly past the enclosure wall; at the Arab dragoman decked out like a cockatoo, wearing a cloak of royal blue flung back over one shoulder, waiting in the sunshine beside the huge gateway; at the camel's fastidious head swaying as it issues from among the papyrus stems; at this ancient man sitting alone in a corner of the atrium at Karnak, murmuring to himself, blind, holy; at the bicycle as it leans against the grating of the pylon, light and graceful, belonging to an utterly different world; at the falcon which soars overhead, crying in the void — how much new movement there is; how fruitful, variegated, and bright is this teeming life, arabesque and scintillating, triumphantly victorious over the dead past of the broken columns!

Nowhere in Greece do we realise, as we realise in Egypt, the significance of a columned shade. For the ancient Egyptians were not thrifty in the use of pillars, as were the Hellenes and the medieval cathedral-builders, and as are the architects of the modern world. In this matter, the churches of the West have borrowed from the Grecian style. But in an Egyptian temple the visitor is oppressed and threatened by a veritable forest of gigantic pillars. Since here all is colossal, in girth they equal that of a venerable oak, while in height they

exceed the trees of our northern world. We are positively hemmed in by them, for, in the most flourishing age of Egyptian architecture (when, for instance, the temple of Ammon was built at Thebes), they were set at least thrice as thickly as in any of the buildings with which we are familiar. They must have been gloomy places when their roofs were still standing, for even to-day they provide a pleasant shade at noon.

So long as I am not being asked to decipher historical reliefs, to con my lesson of the kings and deities represented on the walls, I enjoy the grateful darkness, the heavy and murmurous atmosphere of such a place. But when the Baedeker cross-questioning begins, I, who never know the responses, flee incontinently to the roof of the gate-tower, from whose foot the dark-green countryside stretches to the saffron-yellow hills.

How effective the ruin, the fragment, is, we see best when we study a restored work. At great cost both in time and money, the Americans have restored the rock temple that faces Luxor. The result is that the colonnades might serve as models for a seminary, incongruously thrust into a wild, rocky landscape.

Utterly ridiculous is the aspect of the giant kings, sitting tower-like in the fields, or lying prostrate beneath the palms. Thus lies Ramses on his back near Sakkara, elephantine in bulk, a quadrangular hole in the top of his head where the sculptured crown used to be. The crown is still there, close at hand, but it symbolically detached itself from the head when the wearer tumbled down. Near his loins, two Arabs are dicing — for Ramses' kingdom, one may presume. Hard by is a

notice in four languages: "You are particularly requested not to climb upon the king."

Again, you go for a ride through the cane-fields near Luxor, and happen upon two more of these ungainly monsters (Ramses once more, seated this time), to which, by an afterthought, the legend of Memnon has been attached. Is it possible that they still sing? I eagerly ride round them. Yes, they sing, after a fashion — but the note is the whine of a water-wheel, groaning over its task just behind them.

Estranged, aloof, I roam among these monuments, which it is the fashion of our day to style wonders. Only two of the temples move me, convey a message to me; and these are of a later age, survivals from the Egypt of the Greeks. All the others are put into the shade, the whole of Thebes is put into the shade, by the mighty present activities of this fertile valley, by the living generation of a working people.

King and Falcon

Of all kings, past and present, none has of late years exercised the mind of Europe so much as Tutankhamen. No wonder for that, since he was a reactionary! To me, personally, none has been a greater disappointment. Almost the only admiration persistent in me, in this connexion, has been my admiration for the British newspaper press, which was able to set the world on both sides of the Atlantic astir more effectually than at any time since the days of Schliemann's discoveries. Suggestion was at work almost as powerfully as during the Great War. At length a German professor declared ex

cathedra what common sense had already taught persons of no learning at all. When, here in Egypt, wishing to confirm my own impression, I asked one of the most distinguished among German archæologists about the matter, he said much what I had expected. The interment, he declared, had been very carefully performed, and the grave was more richly furnished than other well-known monarchs' tombs. But there were more notable graves than Tutankhamen's — at Sakkara, for instance.

This particular king got the better of his rivals in that he chose a burial-place even more inaccessible than those of his predecessors, and was thus able to ensure for himself an additional fifty years of life after death. At length, however, an Englishman ferreted him out, by chance; for, a little while before, he had ceased digging a couple of yards away from the right spot, and with the utmost care disclosed what had long been obvious enough. The tomb has now been closed. Your donkey-boy chucks pebbles at a tablet with an inscription, and calls out the name which for a year or two has been in every one's mouth. If you ask him about the mysterious death of the famous newspaper peer, he grins, and in his broken English, gives the following realistic explanation: "Lord pay much money — government keep everything, give up nothing — Lord very sorry, so he die!"

Some of the treasures unearthed here are not yet on show. The rest (a lesser half) are to be seen under glass in Cairo. We already know them to repletion in photographs. The handsomest are the brilliant specimens of

colour work, blue and gold, to be seen on the settle, on the throne (both diminutive in size), and on the Récamier divan, with their lavish display of crowns, suns, eagles and lions' heads — a superabundance of ornament, as in all periods of decadence. Other memorabilia are: some alabaster vases; a small, beautifully inlaid coffer; and the representations of the king himself.

A wooden bust, tinted, half life-size, like a tailor's lay-figure for showing off a boy's suit; arms painted on; face much rubbed, and scaling here and there as if after smallpox; large and melancholy eyes, painted black; broad nose, sensual negroid lips, huge ears. Nearby is another image of the king, very like the one just described, but much smaller, about one-eighth of life-size, with a wasp waist like a tight-laced woman's. We see him once more on the back of the throne, with a python's head, and wearing a ceremonial double crown. In such a light does he present himself to plain persons, those who do not lay any claim to expert knowledge; an interesting figure, less repulsive than his numerous predecessors in the other halls and tombs.

In the next hall are to be seen three quite similar divans, one of them with much finer gold-inlay work; also a number of alabaster vases, and splendid coffers. These are furnishings from the tomb of Yu'e and vases from the tomb of Queen Teye.

In the subsidiary decorations of Tutankhamen's mortuary relics, we have nightmare visions as horrible as those I have already described in which ape-men are driving hippopotamuses. No other emotion than

horror, no sympathetic understanding, comes to us from the contemplation of such things. It is otherwise when we note the gesture, affectionately maternal, of his queen, whose hand rests lightly on his shoulder. This detail on the relief work of the settle remains in our memory — this, and the recollection of the huge crowns their poor heads had to carry.

Tutankhamen's queen was the daughter of Akenaton (Amenophis IV), the genius of his day, the revolutionist who cast down all the detestable beast-gods which contemporary tourists (in their anthropological zeal) take so seriously. He commanded that the sun alone should be worshipped; built himself a new palace; decapitated the old gods in Thebes; styled himself son of the orb of day. His high-bred countenance has become familiar in the Berlin bust. In the Cairo museum, too, his fascinating head is to be seen on the lids of three great vases. He was succeeded on the throne by Tutankhamen, who played the part of Louis XVIII, and restored all the rubbish that had been cleared away.

The oldest of the old gods was the falcon: Horus, the deity of the realm, the king's god; known to-day, when he cries above the Nile, by the name of Shahoun. He is the god of Edfu; and nowhere else in Egypt have I seen finer columns than in the temple of Horus, which still stands by the river, intact.

This brings us back to the question of the fragment, the ruin. Here a perfectly preserved ancient building makes a direct appeal to our hearts, produces an impression which no imaginative attempt to reconstruct a

lost model can disturb. The temple of Horus at Edfu is lovely though it is not a ruin, though it has been preserved in its entirety. The general effect produced by this building is that of an organic whole, reposeful: not colossal, as at Thebes; nor grotesque, as in the tombs. Why is this? Because here we have to do with a Greek paraphrase of an Egyptian theme. It was erected by the Greeks in the third and the second century before Christ, a modification of the ancient style. The great figures on the pylons have been simplified; and the reduced size and the smoothing-out of the hieroglyphs has transformed them into clear-cut reliefs, more pleasing than the confused picture-writing of primitive days. The pillars have been slightly modified to suit the taste of the new time; the capitals are regular, the bases more flattened. From within, I get a comprehensive view of the court and the arcades; great areas, organically disposed; nothing exaggerated, nothing imperialistic.

Leftward of the second gate, sits Horus the falcon, a huge figure in black granite, a guardian rather than a god, looking as if he had never winged his way and never uttered his cry among the columns. The ceiling of the portico, which resembles that of the Pantheon in Rome, is delicately tinted. As we enter, the gloom strikes chill to our heart; yet willy-nilly, we move on among narrowing pillars through three halls to the sanctuary, where the sacrificial altar still stands threateningly, massive and sombre in its unadorned simplicity, just as in the days when nothing but stone and blood was offered up.

Then, from one of the corners, five or six great bats

flutter out, and, for a second, they darken the aperture through which light falls on the sacrificial stone. Quickly I make my way back into the outer court. So much shadow makes one crave for the glare of sunlight.

Sixty miles farther south there rises out of the Nile another Greek temple. Here, too, Horus dwells in stone, and his prototype the falcon soars overhead; and here, too, have the hands of late-comers in Egypt fashioned a temple which still stands entire. But here the hands of the men of an even later generation have built that which is a menace to the integrity of the columns. I speak of Philae, only a few hundred oar-strokes above the great English dam, the new wonder of Egypt. Twenty years ago, all the world was talking of this island temple, threatened with destruction by the engineering works, just as now all the world is talking of the disinterred Egyptian king.

The temple has not yet fallen. Nevertheless, since the whirling waters of the First Cataract have been transformed into a lake, the fertilising flood has robbed the sandstone pillars of their rich yellow tint, and a sinister level line marks the gates, the columns, the rocks in midstream, and those on either shore — the high-water mark of the great reservoir. At my first visit, the slime from Abyssinia had almost completely submerged the colonnades in the north-west of the little island, while even the more highly placed halls of the temple were half under water. A week later, the kiosk had almost disappeared. Our boat drifted amid the ruins, picking its way quaintly among the capitals of the central hall, and its prow abutted on a stone lotus-flower.

AN ARABIAN DOOR

The building still stands, and attempts have been made to strengthen its walls. The brilliantly diversified colours of the upper parts of the ceiling remain to show what has been washed away from the lower. Isis, Horus, and even the worthy Pharaoh, have escaped the new deluge. From the crevices of the masonry, lilac-tinted clover and white-flowering rushes, called forth by the moisture, are sprouting abundantly.

But man's vanity is sleepless. Those who have inscribed their names here have chosen lofty positions, which have escaped the devouring flood. We read that of Hadrian, cut into the stone which was already sanctified by age in the days of Roman rule. Pope Gregory XVI speaks of his mission. The legend "Desaix, Davoust, une armée française commandée par Bonaparte" marks the southern limit of the French adventure in Egypt. Britain has recorded the names of those who fell in the Sudan campaign of 1884. All has been chiselled very simply into the ancient walls, the Roman pontiff alone using gilt lettering. A Coptic cross shows beside the bull's head. Among all the conquerors of the Nile valley, the Mohammedans, the worshippers of Allah (of whom no graven images may be fashioned), have refrained from writing even the name of their god.

The custodian, whose forefathers discharged the dull duties of guardians of the island long before the dam was built, changes his residence as the water rises. By January, he must move to the upper gate. He has much to tell visitors about the glorious colouring of the temple ceiling in days before the flood; prattles con-

cerning the artists who used to frequent the spot; and sighs over the vanished beauties — which neither he nor Europe appreciated until they were taught to bewail that which is irrecoverably lost.

Above the pillars soars and cries the falcon. He knows naught of his deified brother Horus, imaged in stone below; he seeks nothing but mice and fish. From the altitude at which he flies, he can see the dam and the country stretching far beyond. He recks as little of the washing out of tints, the falling of columns, and the decay of gods, as did the doughty engineers who, endowed like him with vision, gazed into the future.

Arabesque

At the solemn portal of stone, the Westerner (who will not take off his shoes as do the faithful) must wait for a moment while the two janitors fit him with great yellow heelless overshoes. Not until this has been done may he go in.

For the university, too, is a mosque; a place whose sanctity is made manifest even at the entrance gate by the ceremonial I have just described. El Azhar in Cairo, the largest and most venerable among the universities of Islam, has been in existence for hard upon two thousand years longer than any other of the world's seats of learning, and even in its present form dates back six centuries. It is simultaneously church, school, university, and college. One of the most charming among the characteristics of this time-hallowed building is that, immediately on emerging from the darkness of the gate, the visitor enters a huge open court, whose colonnades

are filled with hundreds of children, and echo to the twittering of their little voices. In this ante-room to the house of wisdom girls and boys, of ages ranging from six to twelve, are sitting, literally, at their teacher's feet. For the teacher squats Turkish fashion upon a sort of throne of straw (a simple example of a piece of furniture which is becoming unfashionable), while the members of his class of twenty or thirty or forty pupils squat round him in a circle. Since all the classes are going on at once, and are separated one from another only by an arcade or two, and since many of the youngsters are ill-trained and inattentive, there is a general hubbub in this open-air school. The pleasing confusion of the lively little world is magnified by the shadows of the sparrows and the cooing of the pigeons which wing their way overhead. The general effect is that of a strange interweaving of multitudinous sounds and movements. A few steps farther, however, and we find ourselves in twilit pillared galleries, roofed with masonry, shady and cool.

Here those who have outgrown childhood are studying, the universal topic of study being a book, the one and only book that matters. Beautifully carven chests, divided within into three main compartments and each of these into ten sub-compartments, contain the thirty sections of the Koran. The students are grouped around the teacher. They kneel, while he, on a great hassock of straw or stool of wood, sits by one of the pillars. Their ages range up to thirty, though most of them are quite young. Not all of them are Egyptians, for they come hither from every land where Mohammedanism prevails,

sailing across the seas or making pilgrimage through the deserts in order to learn whatever the faithful may lawfully know: theology, jurisprudence, history, ethnography, astronomy. What brings them together, however, is not the idea of an empire, but merely the call of a book. The interpretation of that one book, the Koran, is the only task of the teacher, and comprises the totality of his wisdom, is the essence of his knowledge and his life — just as in the Ghetto the interpretation of the Torah is the first word of knowledge and the last, the alpha and the omega of wisdom, both human and divine.

Yet these teachers are not in religious orders of any kind, are not even lay-priests. Their only resemblance to the latter is that they are extremely poor. The hundreds of teachers who instruct the twelve thousand students of El Azhar are practically unpaid. All that they get in return for their services is the privilege of living rent-free in the chambers of this labyrinth, and a free allowance of bread. This last is usually doled out to them a month's ration at a time. The teacher must fetch it at an appointed place, and must carry it about with him in the sack which (as you see) now stands beside the holy book. These flattened discs, these round loaves of unspiced bread (which constitute the almost exclusive diet of the learned men of Araby), are a great bone of contention between the teachers and the thousands of students who are fed at the cost of the State. Every few years or so, teachers and taught come to fisticuffs over the matter of the bread dole, and in these cases it is always the blind among the students

who incite their fellows to attack certain teachers alleged to be grabbing more than their share.

A student lies curled up on the steps, his cloak drawn over his head, sound asleep, despite all the noise made by the vociferating teachers. In the East, where strenuous activity is neither expected or extolled, sleep is a great and sacred matter. I have seen a holy man, half squatting, half recumbent, asleep, still murmuring his prayers. Nowhere, among these disciples of the Prophet, was there any sign of the ardour, the ecstasy, of truth. What was being inculcated upon them was the practical wisdom of life, equanimity, the acceptance of fate's decrees; subtilised forms of enjoyment.

In the museum, founded or at any rate arranged by German scholars, this impression of a worldly-wise, variegated, and serene doctrine is intensified. Arabic ornamentation is delicate, full of curves and flourishes, simultaneously fine and bold, so that one who is acquainted with Oriental poetry has a ready understanding of all the vivifying heights of this eastern world. Doors and door-posts, benches, coffers, columns — all are fantastically carved and chased. We see locks whose secret wards elude our understanding; vases and lamps of the smoked topaz tint beloved of the Venetians; amulets in the form of preposterous dragons; plates and other utensils of earthenware, sea-green and sky-blue — all these combine to bewilder a visitor. He looks at the mosaic floor and the faceted columns of a fountain; suddenly the patterns are set in motion, as it were, by the outflow of water from numerous points; and only when a brown-skinned man silently extends a

hand for a gratuity does he realise that this hand has turned an unseen cock.

Nothing is symbolic, everything is actual; the extant signifies nothing beyond what it plainly is. Ancient astronomical implements with quaint bronze pointers show forth the signs of the zodiac; majolicas display the coats of arms of officials at the court of the caliph, the marshal of the hunt and of the games taking the lead with his polo mallet of seven hundred years back; a scrap of red carpet under glass purports to be the oldest piece of woven stuff in the world; the green flag of the Prophet, tattered, but trimmed with gold, bears witness to ancient bickerings — and from all these relics there still radiates the vigorous faith that is established upon the Koran.

To inscribe Allah's name anywhere and everywhere, has always been the chief art of this race with a passion for writing; and the passion has been indulged throughout the centuries, sometimes in huge calligraphical flourishes, and sometimes in a lovely miniature script. Forbidden to make pictures or statues of the deity they worshipped, the Moslemin were none the less moved by an eager wish to give visible and durable expression to their reverence; that is why the sign-manual of Allah or a text from the Koran is to be found as a picturesque mural decoration in every niche set apart for prayer. On richly adorned lecterns, there stand in series the most ancient transcripts of the Koran, mammoth tomes. We, who cannot read a line of Arabic, nevertheless feel the solemn clarity of the utterances breathing through the exquisite writing. But only to the specialist will the

huge volumes (chained, and behind glass and bars) yield up their stores of antique wisdom, penned in gold upon red. These Korans belonged of old to mighty sultans, whose names are associated with them, each with each. The earliest of all has come down to us from the eighth century of the Christian era.

Farther back, inscribed upon illuminated pages, we see the poetry of the East, the lyrics of Hafiz. These are in a very small writing, as is proper for secular verse, whose theme is not God, but love; poems full of picturesque imagery, and richly interspersed with miniature illustrations. We see Zuleika sitting beside Yussuf on a divan, surrounded by knights. Dromedaries pick their way through the lovers' plaints. They themselves wear red robes as they wander over the leaves that record their dreams and their passionate vows, but the parasol which the lovely Zuleika lets fall is golden and blue. Slowly and reverently, when the case has been opened for me, I venture to turn the leaves of this volume so full of life, that I may see more of the poems which some of the sultans have copied with their own hands.

Amid ballads and romances I am unable to read, I see a picture of a prince hurling an old man down from a tower; the victim's turban has become dislodged from his head, and its tassel waves across the page. Lovers sit in gardens; friends tread out the grapes (for even Mohammedan poets sing the praises of the forbidden wine); a drunken man is carried home; a beggar is chased from a house-door by a porter, whose master sits in the garden holding three cakes, while the negro cook is bringing other dainties; a Persian in blue robes

and another in yellow are playing polo, just as the English are playing it in Cairo to-day, near the great bridge across the Nile; ladies on horseback pluck harps and pipe on flutes, while their lord and master the shah, weary of their company, is borne past on his way to the hunting-field.

A clear-cut world, self-assured. Strength and common sense, skill and cleverness, are the lords of life. There is no mysticism, no subtlety of interpretation; romance itself takes a strenuous form. Ornamented with texts from the Koran is the golden scabbard wherein the ruler of this land was wont to sheathe his sword; but the sword was sharp, the wells were deep, the gallows high. Nor in these matters has there been much change. Fantasy and force, intelligence and boldness, still animate the world of Araby. Those who try to dream in it are speedily shaken out of their slumbers by the combatants who praise Allah's name.

Heads in Alexandria

In the city of Alexander, the traveller looks in vain for any obvious sign that the great Macedonian passed that way; or for vestiges of Roman rule, for footsteps of pleasure-loving Antony and enigmatical Cleopatra (upon whose children her Roman adorer bestowed provinces); or for memorials of Pompey, slain here by order of the fourteenth Ptolemy.

Not until we forage the museum, do we at length discover, numbered and docketed, the relics of centuries that believed themselves imperishable. Amid rows of scarabs, lovely specimens of carved ivory, repulsive

CHILDREN IN THE DESERT

mummies, porphyry sphinxes, fragments of carpet and scraps of papyrus, necklaces of lapis lazuli, anklets and bracelets of gold and of oxidised silver, you will unawares happen upon five little busts of Alexander, rough copies made in Italy, one and all reflecting the faults of a mendaciously idealised original. Disappointed, you turn to a gigantic arm, screwed on to a wooden pedestal that stands in the middle of the hall, the hand holding the round world in its grip. Then you traverse halls filled with fine terra-cotta figurines, pale blue and lemon yellow and dull lilac, their tints as fresh and delicate as when they were painted thousands of years ago; figures in repose or merry or mournful. Sapphic women, for here you are in Greece.

At length you enter a polygonal hall, a small place, containing coins by the hundred. Now history is spread before you in miniature, the history whose life-size footprints you had fruitlessly looked for in the streets and the squares.

Ranged behind glass are the likenesses of the rulers who swayed the destinies of Alexandria from close at hand or from afar; they, their wives, their sons, their deadly foes, all resting quietly side by side; Roman emperors and Egyptian kings on disks of silver and of gold which once served as measures of value for all the goods of life; medallions of varying intrinsic worth, but of priceless importance to the physiognomist.

In one of the cases are the likenesses of the Ptolemies, whose crest, a phoenix or griffin, continually recurs, framed in a Greek inscription. Sometimes the ruler's

head is inset upon the breast of the bird, which struts stiffly. The men whose heads are here pictured, bull-necked, with delicately curved noses and arched nostrils, were the founders of museums and libraries in Alexandria, and collectors of all the later wisdom of the Hellenes. Here we see the third of the name, Ptolemy the Benefactor, a man with a clever face (mouth a little open) and eyes that must have been piercing. In later days, the line is obviously degenerate; the men have become so womanish, the women so masterful, that it is not easy to recognise the sexes at the first glance. Next we see coins from the satrapies, distinguishable by the highly elaborated figure of an Amazon like those depicted in Carthaginian reliefs. She has a martial stride, holds her shield level as if it were a plate, is slender of limb, with hips like a boy's.

Of a sudden, Alexander's head, on a gold piece, the great helmet bulking largely, and much pains to represent the curling locks! This is no longer the profile of the self-confident youth, who founded Alexandria in the early days of his victorious career; we see the man of later years, melancholic, with a full chin and a thick neck. Another coin, a rare one, shows Alexander's father, Philip, driving in his war-chariot, whipping on the stallions.

Now the visitor's eye is attracted by rows upon rows of faces belonging to a very different type; the Roman emperors who held sway in Alexandria for five centuries and more.

The momentous series begins with Nero's huge head,

showing the lineaments of genius even in decay, the genius he turned to such base uses. Next him is his stepmother, Messalina, whose face and doings are of worldwide notoriety. Close at hand we note Claudius, her husband, by whose orders she was slain; a thick-necked Caesar, devoid of talent. Then, as if dominating the group, the younger Agrippina, Claudius's second wife and Nero's mother, who poisoned her husband in order to put her son (adopted by Claudius) on the imperial throne. We see a woman of thirty, with a wide mouth and narrow lips; her eyes are defiant but suspicious; able to rule men because she had an intellect powerful enough to hold her passions in leash; more highly gifted than any others of her circle, to perish in the end by the dagger-thrust of an assassin hired by her own son.

To another world belong the countenances of the emperors of the Flavian line. In them, sensuality was curbed by manly strength; and they established their power and maintained it with few, if any murders. Vespasian, who lived a good while in Alexandria, is represented by numerous coins. We see a gigantic neck; a short, square, and dogged chin; a hard mouth. A strict ruler, a stern parent, with little taste for the pleasures of life, and spurred to action by a sense of duty. Despising women, he used them freely for his own purposes; was energetic, taciturn, sometimes inscrutable. His son, the handsome Titus, is not to be found in this collection. Nerva comes next, a phenomenal figure. An old man's withered head is supported by a slender neck; nose extremely crooked;

lonely of aspect; robed as a senator. Close at hand is his adopted son, Trajan, utterly different; venturesome, happy, a man of genius.

There are numerous representations of Hadrian, Trajan's successor. Both chin and nose are long and pointed, the features of one who is ever in quest of something, shrewd, a trifle pedantic. Beside him is his wife, Sabina, royal of mien like her husband, but more harmonious, looking out into the distance. She has a classical chin; is mature, rather tart, unsensual, melancholy of aspect like Frau von Stein.

Close to these brilliant misanthropes is the visage of their successor, Antoninus Pius. He has a clever head like that of an early Italian scholar, and wears a full beard and flowing locks; features irregular, eyes deep-set; an eccentric. His wife, Faustina, with an intelligent and pleasing profile, looks across at him; she excels him in mother-wit.

Who comes now? Surely this is an old friend? Yes, we have met him in Rome, of a morning, when we mounted Michelangelo's shallow staircase; and again of an evening, when coming down from the Palatine into the square where he has been sitting a-horseback for the last four hundred years — the philosopher-emperor, in the middle of the midmost hill, at the centre of the capital of the world. Most of us are well acquainted with the face of Marcus Aurelius, distinguished thinker, who suffered in silence, and became Roman emperor almost by chance. We know the long and tranquil forehead, the searching and yet resolute eyes; we have read his *Meditations*, the blunt and sombre utterances of

a mind strictly controlled. But our eyes stray to the golden image of his wife, to the splendid profile of the younger Faustina. Suddenly we understand the man through the woman.

No sight is vouchsafed of Caracalla. His successor, Heliogabalus, murdered when only eighteen, though not before he had acquired a reputation throughout the world for unrestraint, looks tragical rather than dissolute. His eyes are narrowed, and the corners of his mouth are drawn down, as if in displeasure at his own vices. Such a view of him seems confirmed when we study a coin bearing the portrait of one of his wives, a little cocotte, stupid and dangerous.

Now our eyes are arrested by the square, somewhat mean-looking head of Diocletian; by his turned-up nose, his unobservant expression, his look of a man without vision. It was he who took three coadjutors to share the burdens of government, and in the end retired from the cares of State without any special reason for doing so. The museum has no coin of Constantine, Diocletian's successor; but it has some of his mother, Helena, an able woman, whose attractive head with its coquettishly dressed hair, and whose smile that betrays the lusts of the flesh even in the matron, are in keeping with her destiny, as mother of a great man. The last head in the collection is that of a decadent, Valentinian III, a good-looking lad, whose face, however, lacks intelligence. It is undistinguished, blinking at you from beneath broad brows. He wears the double coronal as if it were assumed in sport, a toy.

Pompey is nowhere to be seen.

I quit the numismatic cabinet, and pass from the glitter of the coins to the glitter of the white street under the noontide sun.

Catching sight of a lonely hill, I climb it. From a wide surface of rubble, there rises a tall pillar of red granite. A dark-skinned brat wearing a white gandora, who has been asleep there, gets up, points skyward, and says "Pompeio." That is the great triumvir's only memorial in the town of Alexandria.

In the Suez Canal

I spent the night on deck.

From the lighthouse at Port Said a triple cone of blue light circles unceasingly. Ahead and astern of us, in the broad mouth of the canal, are many steamships, great and small. They exchange light signals. Suddenly three stars soar up to a moderate height, where they remain for a while, as though fixed to an invisible yard. It is as if Orion's belt had descended into terrestrial regions.

I look down once more. The last crates that have to be shipped are chained together, and the huge crane, which has been swinging without pause from ship to lighter and back again, lifts them and lowers them into the hold. Noiselessly a shore-boat comes to the gangway. A smartly dressed man, grey-headed, gets out of her, and goes swiftly up to the bridge. He is the Suez pilot. The anchor chains rattle.

At the brow of the ship, a brilliant funnel-shaped beam of light now appears, illuminating our path. The searchlight has been turned on. For one night, the

vessel has a Cyclopean eye. The last lighter casts off. Dark figures, those of the stevedores who have been serving our crane, stand on the receding craft watching the departure of the great vessel, which glides onward, animated with a light of its own creation, while they are left behind in the darkness.

Though we are moving forward through the water, no vibration from the screw is perceptible. In the canal there is a speed limit of five knots an hour. Our ship is holding her breath, but ahead of us, in the rays of the searchlight, are wreaths of steam, whirling up from the small boats that minister to the canal traffic. These curls of vapour look like the breath from the nostrils of a horse in winter. Calls from the bridge echo through the night. The canal narrows rapidly.

The banks, which are the edges of the desert, shine brilliantly under the searchlight. The fine sand glitters dazzlingly.

Another Cyclopean eye makes its appearance south of us in the desert, a bluish light which slowly approaches. A rustling sound is heard; then, shouting. The light is so blinding that nothing can be seen of the other ship, even when she is quite close. The canal is narrow (well under a hundred yards), and when ocean-going vessels have to pass one another, one of them must make fast. We reach a post on the bank; some sailors carry a hawser ashore in a boat; the giant ship is moored to the bollard as if she were but a skiff. In the bow, abaft, on the bridge, all is astir with life; shouts, answering shouts, curses, orders. The engine stops; the anchor is let go; we are motionless.

The whole thing has not taken more than five minutes. While we, creaking and groaning, must press up to the bank, the other vessel, tall as a house, glides past, her voyage uninterrupted. Curses in the night greet her passage, as if she were a malefactor. The sides of the two great ships are barely twenty feet apart. Now it is over. The hawser is cast loose from the bollard, the anchor is weighed, the engine pulses once more. The sailors make their boat fast, and quickly climb aboard by the rope ladders. Again we are gliding through the water, between the banks of desert.

Having gone to sleep in the smoking-room, I wake at dawn to find that we are in a broad lagoon. It is one of the Bitter Lakes which, interposed between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, have facilitated the cutting of the canal.

Nowhere else in the world can such a prospect be viewed from shipboard. A flat outlook, before, behind, and to either side. Immediately around us, the level sea, slightly ruffled; farther off, the eastern desert and the western, stretching away into the infinite.

Only at high noon in summer, when the light is dispersed, and seldom anywhere but in the far south, can we, on shipboard in the open sea, have such an impression of infinitude. Should there be a haze, this feeling does not arise, for then we imagine that we are being cheated, that somewhere behind the veil of mist a boundary is hidden. If, on the other hand, the weather is perfectly clear, the sharply cut horizon dispels the illusion of a world without end.

But the desert is unending. The yellowish sheen reflected from the sand influences the whole colour scheme, with a polychrome effect. Near at hand the sea is green, a little farther off streaks of violet appear, then turquois, then a reddish orange. The next streak, soft in tint, is of a clear olive; next comes yellow, in strong illumination at first, in shadow beyond. Delicately sharp are all outlines, more so than any you have seen before. Even sand-dunes are different, for the lines are often blurred by vegetation. The shapes we see in the desert are not those of buildings, are not fast fixed; they are in a flux, change with changes in the wind, can no more be mapped than the waves of the sea can be charted. As in the spectrum of polarised light-rays, these mutable forms change in colour from violet to sepia, golden yellow, golden red, red lilac, sea-green. Across the surface made up of these scintillating multi-coloured waves, glides our ship, at quarter-speed; our ship, which is the only object endowed with a purpose amid the purposeless waste.

Now two funnels show ahead of us, leaning away from us, waiting where the next stretch of the canal debouches into the Bitter Lake — for even in the latter the navigable channel is not wide enough for two big ships to pass one another easily. The rules of precedence in the canal are complicated, the right of priority depending upon tonnage, upon whether a ship is outward or homeward bound, and so on. A freighter must give way to a mail-boat. This time the advantage is on our side, so we forge ahead while the other vessels await our pleasure.

Queer-looking silhouettes are crossing our bows; they are camels being ferried over the canal. A little farther on, a man is swimming across, bundle on head, an Arab who has come hither through the Arabian desert. When he reaches the Egyptian bank, he climbs dripping out of the water, lowers his bundle on to his back, and strides forth into the desert of a new continent, into Africa. Thus do prophets wander.

When we are at lunch, the land glides past the round port-holes. One could fancy oneself in the dining-car of a train, were it not that the landscape moves so smoothly, instead of jolting.

Complaints of boredom are general. "These thirteen hours in the Suez Canal are frightfully tedious," says a planter's wife, who has been through it time and again. "The banks are so desolate." One of our lieutenants chimes in: "Yes, it is wearisome scenery — nothing to hold on to." The missionary's contribution is in the anthropological vein: "There can be no doubt that the general aspect and the climate of the desert have an influence on the character of its inhabitants."

We have forerunners and companions. Naked boys and men, Bedouins, Arabs, run along the bank beside the steamer, shout to the passengers. These amuse themselves by throwing rolls to the coloured folk on shore, and the natives are ill-bred enough to laugh when the missels fall short and tumble into the water. But when one of them reaches the land there is a scramble to secure the prize.

A second lake opens before us. A flight of storks, homeward bound, overtakes us, and speeds on ahead.

TRAVEL THROUGH THE DESERT

The planter's wife sighs, and exclaims: "If one could but join you, could travel your pace." (Her husband is awaiting her on the slopes of Kilimanjaro.)

On a post that juts out of the lake sits a cormorant, black and motionless, the bird of wisdom, as big as an eagle, owl-like in its expression. Two hen-harriers are soaring in spirals above an inlet where fish are presumably to be found. In the direction of the Delta, something that looks like a pale lilac cloud is moving athwart the sky. With the aid of a telescope we discover that it is made up of flamingos.

A man standing beside me points to an oasis, and speaks of Cambyses. It is El Kantara, the place where both Alexander the Great and Octavius Caesar entered Egypt. Footsteps in the sand!

Now a breeze begins to blow. The new sea we are approaching, the sea of Africa, sends it from the south. Can airs so refreshing be wafted to us from the redoubtable Red Sea? We are drawing near to the Gulf of Suez.

A narrow-gauge railway from Cairo comes down to the water's edge. The light deepens and intensifies as the afternoon advances. Everything we see in the desert, be it fixed or in motion, is an isolated object. We contemplate a palm-tree, alone in the desert; a veiled woman, alone in the desert; a group of apparently petrified camels, alone in the desert. Each of these things that we look at, stands solitary and black upon the golden yellow sand against the background of an opal-tinted sky. Just before we reach Suez we pass a village of mud-huts on the Arabian shore. As I look

at it, I see a lonely woman striding towards a lone village.

Suddenly a black group comes into sight. Twenty camels lie motionless on the sand; prostrating themselves nearby are twenty Arabs, likewise motionless, praying. The hour of sunset, and evening prayer. We are at Suez, have entered the Red Sea. In the clear light of the desert, some palms which are a good way off seem close at hand. "The Wells of Moses," says the first officer, pointing to them with a smile. "It was there," puts in the missionary, "that Moses, when he had escaped the hosts of Pharaoh, made the briny waters drinkable by steeping herbs in them. The Arabs do the same thing to-day."

Stepping back a pace or two, I feasted my eyes once more on the lovely outline of the gently sloping hills. In the fading light, uncertain forms were shimmering like mother-of-pearl.

Then, with amazing swiftness, night fell, blotting out both land and sea.

STAMBOUL

On the Wing — The Gate of Bliss — The Three Rings — Stone Coffins — Dumb Walls — Le Bon and the Porter — Above the Seas — Retrospect

STAMBOUL

On the Wing

The Bridge of the Nations is in darkness. At this hour there are no custodians, as in the daytime when there is a press of wayfarers; no officials with cloaks and wallets, taking toll of all who cross. Lanterns, large but few in number, throw a fitful light upon the Golden Horn, where ships a-many are sleeping no less soundly than the multitude they shelter. Rarely does any Frank see thus deserted the highway that links Pera with Stamboul, unites the spurious European town with the genuine Turkish one — a road momentous for both. No hoofs clatter upon its hard surface, no car speeds along it; no oar sounds in rowlock, no call breaks the silence of the night. Who would dream that in two hours from now, by seven o'clock, the life of one of the great capitals of the world will be surging across this bridge, the awakened spirit of two seas and many peoples?

In the grey of morning, the train starts from Stamboul (where the main line from Europe ends) for the suburb close to which the aerodrome is situated. Will the weather clear; will it be a good day for flying? The sky over the eastward sea assumes a greenish tint; brighter grows the hue of the clouds behind the quaint towers of the huge and now ruinous wall with which

Theodosius guarded the city against onslaughts from the sea. Working folk join this early train at each of the little stations where it stops; men and women, shivering with cold, their movements betraying the weariness of those who have resigned themselves to evil fortune. Will it be a good day for flying? Shall I be able to soar over them like a bird, uplifted above that modicum of freedom which I have always been able to wrest from fate? Cloud masses roll helter-skelter over one another as the day strengthens.

I quit the train at a little coast town, to drive along an apology for a road, across the inhospitable steppe of which the remnant of European Turkey mainly consists, to the hangars, shadows in the mist. Is it, then, so difficult to get off the solid earth? Must one tramp through a sleeping city, travel in a freezing train while day is dawning, jolt across the steppe as soon as it is fully light, to be kept waiting in the end outside some wooden sheds — and a long way from the sheds at that! For the Turkish sentry bars my progress with his rifle, indicating by his gestures that there is "no admittance" to this paradise of birds. I show him my credentials, but he remains inexorable, points to printed form, raises chin and eyebrows with the Oriental's incomparable gesture of mingled pride and resignation, clicks with his tongue, all combining to tell me as plainly as if he could speak my language: "No use, my fine fellow, I can't read it!"

At long last, however, the doors slide open, one of the flying monsters is disclosed in the dark interior, I hear a word of command in an unknown tongue. Then,

pushed from behind by unseen hands, the metal framework (clumsy in shape, and yet graceful in its movements) rolls forward easily enough into the open day.

"It is cloudy," says the pilot, "but there are holes in the clouds. Do you see that little rag of blue? We can get through there all right."

Is he a sorcerer or a braggart? The rift of which he speaks is very high up, barely discernible, looking like a dormer window open into heaven — and this ponderous man in command of this preposterous framework tells me he can get through it as easily as he can walk through a folding-door! He proceeds to make himself still heavier, muffling himself and me in leather waistcoat, fur coat, and cloak over all; his hands become huge, his head grows gigantic; he puts on a helmet, wears goggles to protect eyes and cheeks, draws a high collar over his mouth. Then, standing in front of the formidable creature, he makes the great screw spin, faster and faster, the vanes churning the air, combining to form a solid wheel. When satisfied, he stops the trial revolutions. How alarming are all these tests! How the great beast has snorted, even before starting! Can a thing so crass rise into the air? We take our seats. The screw turns, and the Orientals in attendance have to leap back, scatter, and run out of the way as we move forward — fleeing, terrified men, the last sight before we leave the grounds.

For hardly has the machine begun to race across the steppe upon its rubber-tired wheels, when the jolting ceases. I look overboard, and see that these wheels are

already up in the air, whirling idly from the impetus of their earlier motion.

We are rising. The field of vision widens with incredible speed. Hills come into view; houses drop down; a tower sinks; roads melt into the landscape; everything looks askew, as in some of the baroque ceilings; all is confusion, crazy, like this monster which, with mad clatter, coughing and spitting, snorting, rattling, roaring, makes its way upward through the air. Now the sea appears, likewise askew, as if painted on a piece of theatrical scenery held on the slant; and we wheel in the rays which fall obliquely on its surface, in a way that recalls one of Grünewald's visions.

We must surely be already at a great height. Is that the town, that little patch of grey stone, cleft by a slender inlet of water? Can that be the great city of world-wide renown, huge, mysterious, spreading over hills and dales round an arm of the sea? That slender black line must be the Bridge of the Nations; that tiny oval, the Golden Horn. Quickly growing accustomed to see things from this new angle, I can soon pick out the minarets (fountains shooting skywards, frozen into stone) and the domes, the buildings within whose dimly lit interior the faithful worship Allah. Did I not dream of a wondrous city, viewed from on high? Down there is Byzantium, with its myriad contorted streets, shrunk into the semblance of an ant-hill, where terrified men, huddled together, ant-like, seek shelter from the storms.

Look at that narrow, sinuous band, greenish-blue in colour. Where it ends, northward, there opens a wide

expanse of waters, dark as the name by which they are known, but ever more clearly lighted, and, in the far distance, marked off by a sharp horizon from the sombre vault of the skies.

One to whom flights of fancy come easily, though he finds it hard to drive a motor-car, can now feel all that he has read about so often. A picture, a word, an unspoken thought, sets imagination soaring. After circling up here in the void for a while, studying the aspect of the town, identifying the seas and straits and bays that lie beneath, I soon learn to recognise the mountains I have so often contemplated from the ground level. That one, rising aslant above the clear waters of the Sea of Marmora, is the Bithynian Olympus. Beyond, stretching to the east, in the light of morning, is Asia. Do you realise it? Asia!

If you fly south-eastward for a few hours, guided only by your little pocket compass, you will cross Anatolia, the land of poppies and of shepherds; will glide above Konieh with its blue-tiled mosques; will catch a glimpse of Eski-Shehr with its stores of meerschaum. Tarsus, thrice famous in universal history, comes and goes beneath you. Now you are over Aleppo, in whose arched bazaars ancient glassware from Phoenicia gleams. The twin rivers conduct your flight past Bagdad. Now the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and beneath a vertical sun you fly above the smoke-begrimed town of Bombay. Fleeing from this city of a million, speeding your way south-eastward, you look down for a few seconds on the green isle where the palm-trees flourish, and hover above Colombo's torrid palaces. Then, turning your

back upon the declining orb of afternoon, you wing your flight in a new direction, sinking gently to the ground at eventide in the Middle Kingdom.

I close my eyes for a moment or two, while my thoughts thus roam at large. Reopening them, it is to find the whole prospect changed. I look in vain for towers and domes, seas and inlets. Clouds envelop us, and only through occasional gaps do I catch glimpses of green waters beneath. Though all familiar landmarks have vanished, I recognise one thing clearly, the grotesque outline of the pilot in front of me is framed in blue. He has reached the hole in the clouds which, ten minutes ago in the aerodrome, seemed to me inaccessibly high. He has been flying steadily heavenward!

That radiant body in the heavens, is it star or planet? Above the softly moving cloud canopy, under the sun, the earth-born monster on whose back we ride takes a marvellously aimless, divinely purposeless course, in a world of its own. Where is the town with its minarets? What has become of the myriads upon myriads who live and think in that square block of houses which, just now, seemed one of the most famous cities in the world? Bays, mountains, and seas? I have forgotten Turkey. Europe has vanished. What insignificant problems were those about which so much blood flowed, those about which men cudgelled their brains. Up here, in the vast expanse, even the clamour of the flying monster can be ignored; I no longer mark that a human hand, guided by an unerring brain, is controlling the mechanism upon which the flight depends. If there be a roaring, it is not that of engine or propeller, alien, hostile; it is that of

a solitude such as I have never known in the darkest nights of youth, of a freedom which is palpable and yet infinite. Thought hurls itself into the ether, onward, ever onward, without bourn.

At noon when, homeward bound, I walk over the resounding Bridge of the Nations, the life of the East is surging shoulder-high around me.

Tall, handsome Circassians curse as they drive their four-in-hand yokes of oxen; Anatolians, in brightly coloured robes, thwack their little donkeys, as if the poor beasts were not already having their flanks sufficiently belaboured by the paniers full of grapes between which the riders squat; well-to-do Arabs pass me, attended by porters, who groan under the weight of iron-bound chests; Persians with long skirts and narrow beards are deafening one another as they barter and haggle over their exotic wares; beggars, whining after the customary manner, touch the passer-by as if he were a god, contact with whom would heal their ills. Young soldiers are being shipped off somewhither, to be let blood; veiled women, breathing heavily, carry the burden of hope in their swelling wombs; beneath the railings of the bridge, naked nigger babies are sucking their mothers' bronze-tinted breasts. Shipmen are swearing, sailors are quarrelling, a prince drives by in a gilded carriage on his way to call on the grand vizier, motor-cars in which bestarred pashas are seated roll swiftly past, steamers are snorting, sirens shrieking, a medley of noise and movement — new and ever new incitements of trade, of hunger, of desire, longings perpetually frustrated, urging

those who flow unceasingly across the Bridge of the Nations.

For my part, I look at the cloudy sky, searching for a rift in its canopy, thinking of that Beyond which can be reached in a few minutes, without passing through the gate of death.

The Gate of Bliss

Ancient cypresses grow at the entrance, as if the place were a cemetery; and in very truth the old Turkey lies buried here. For here, where Constantine built his acropolis, and where so many of the rulers of the Eastern Empire flourished and died, was the summer palace of the sultans from the sixteenth century until the nineteenth. Then Abdul Mejid removed to the Bosphorus, where he built the great marble palace of Dolma Bagcheh.

There is nothing of the marble palace kind here; only a garden, and some unsubstantial structures. At first none of these can be seen, since they are encircled by great walls; for the life of the Turks has ever been characterised by suspicion and secretiveness. Courts within courts, shut off one from another by titanic masonry, by embrasured towers; and it is this second large court, surrounded by Italian cloisters and shaded by cypresses, which gives the impression of a burial-ground. Yet in the right-hand portion of the second court, we already see tokens that a complicated life must have gone on close at hand; we see nine quaint chimneys, not unlike those of a coke-furnace, the chimneys of the nine kitchens that used to smoke for the

sultan, his mother, his sultanas, his eunuchs, and all the others who were grouped in the immediate vicinity of his greatness. These kitchens cannot but remind us of legends of the caliph, so that now it seems easier to believe we are drawing near to the place where he used to live.

Yes, there it is, the entrance gate, Bab-i-Seadet, the Gate of Bliss, with its many pillars and its huge eaves, somewhat Chinese in design, and cheerful rather than dignified, as is fitting for the entry into an abode of bliss. In the gateway there stands blinking, with the unmeaning smile characteristic of his tribe, an elderly eunuch, who has nothing left to guard. Now we are in the caliph's seraglio. At first we can see naught but a medley of squat glass-houses, and between them the blue of the sea, on to whose shining mirror this north-eastern corner of Stamboul looks down from a moderate elevation. There is not really a palace here, nor yet a system of palaces. One sultan after another ran up a flimsy kiosk for himself, capriciously, just as the fancy seized him.

Some of the marble gates are in excellent repair; others are ruinous. One building is resplendent with gold and azure; another, hard by, has a moss-grown and crumbling roof. Persian carpets of rare beauty are interspersed with modern rugs of atrocious colouring; sofas whose framework is of gold lacquer stand on priceless brocades which in the West not even a war profiteer would venture to lay upon the floor. We see a wealth of ornament, but very little culture; riches, without a feeling for style; a voluptuous hotchpotch of all that is soft, comfortable, and glittering.

Many parts of the seraglio are still closed to visitors, the "divan" among them. A Frank who wants to see even as much as I did, must pull a good many strings in high places. For the rest, he is informed that in the pavilion which is surrounded by pillars the sultan, seated upon a huge divan, used to give audience to the emissaries of the foreign powers. In the middle of this hall was a fountain, which began to play as soon as the reception started. The plashing of the water served the same purpose as the double doors through which you must pass before you can enter the council chamber of the South African gold magnates. The noise was just enough to prevent an eavesdropper from overhearing the State secrets that were discussed. (Avis aux diplomés !)

In these enclosed gardens, the nearer we get to the balustrade abutting on the sea, the finer are the pleasure-houses. The old plane-trees, tall and stately, have outtopped the low marble buildings which form a setting for each of them like a frame. Within the quadrangle that encloses each tree, a flower-bed is disposed in a smaller square.

A little round tower now attracts our attention. This is known as the Medicine Tower, for there, in a small, ill-lighted room, sat the Sultan's physician in ordinary, compounding poisons for cures or for murders. In a niche, we see a great chest, lined with velvet, containing sixteen cut-glass vials arranged in a square. Each of these bears a Latin name, though the books the doctor studied are Arabic, one and all, beautifully bound. The faithful scan their pages eagerly, as if they hoped to find,

not the lore of poisons only, but a solution of the riddle of life and death.

In the adjoining kiosk that riddle answers itself; or, at any rate, it is answered in terms so delicately beautiful that we cease questioning, and accept such artistry as a sufficient answer. In the western corner of the terrace is the Bagdad Kiosk, built by Sultan Murad IV in 1640 to celebrate the conquest of Bagdad and its annexation. From outside, this kiosk, too, looks little more than a summer-house; but its height, its dome, and the materials of which it is constructed, arouse our expectations. The interior is a single cruciform chamber, high-domed though small, with four bays, each supplied with a huge divan, and four doors leading out to the roofed gallery that surrounds it. The light that comes from windows in the dome (the only illumination) falls upon a Gobelin carpet, olive-green and red; upon the thick and costly coverings of the divans; upon the blue majolica tiles with which the whole of the interior is lined. The whole, except for round the doorways, where the tiles are replaced by inlays of brown and white wood. Should you pass your hand over the wall, the contrast between the cold tiles and the warm wood will call up in your imagination the vicissitudes of love which, aforetime, in this pleasure-house of the caliphs, were cultivated with all the languorous refinement of the East.

If, in such an hour of dalliance, the caliph looked up into the dome of his abode of bliss, he saw it glowing gently, reddish gold, in the light of the afternoon sun. Behind him, men and women were paying with death in

all its shapes for a look, a word, a suspicion; in front of him, ten thousand slaves were at his beck and call, and his wives stood in silks at the door, awaiting his nod; on either hand his ships sailed by, freighted with gold and precious stones, brought to his great harbours over all the seas; and one who should travel a thousand miles beyond those mountains where (across the narrow channel) Asia began, would still not have reached the end of his dominions.

Three centuries ago, when the caliph built this pleasure-house, he could in the world of the actual outbid such wanton dreams of power and greed, vengefulness and lust. Once again the man of to-day is fain to enquire: "Is it not well that these things are of the past?"

The Three Rings

Thrice every day, from the gallery of the minaret, the muezzin calls: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet!" Thrice every day, the priest prays before the cross of the triune God, belief in whom, and in none other is essential to salvation. Thrice every day, the rabbi murmurs: "The Lord of Hosts is the one and only God." Nowhere does creed rub shoulders with creed so impartially, momentously, and tolerantly, as in this sole survivor of the capitals of the world, where the races are so thoroughly mingled. For all wear the same fez; Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans; among the Christians, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Chaldeans; among the Jews, Sephardics and Ashkenazics; among the Mohammedans, Sunnites and Shiites; all alike are Osmanli.

At Eastertide, when the adherents of every faith except the Mohammedan were holding festival, I went from one meeting house to another, from one religious chief to another, to be impressed by the unavowed unity that, in this stratified soil of Byzantium, unquestionably prevails among the creeds. It takes the form of a steady increase in tolerance — a tolerance which already in Arabian story discovered the three rings that, finding their way into the kindly and judicious hands of the German poet, were incorporated by him into the fable of Nathan. In Stamboul, among the Christians alone there are twelve sects, each of which regards itself as "orthodoxy," so that there might be from sixteen to eighteen rings all contesting one another's genuineness — if contest there were. But, thanks to the political exigencies of these various communities, and thanks no less to the tolerance of the Mohammedans in religious matters, they are able to live peacefully side by side, each of the sects voicing the name of God in its own peculiar tongue.

Most democratic of all are the Armenian Christians, whose history goes back to the eighth century. Their patriarch, a man in the middle forties, with the palace and the status of an ambassador, is a taciturn politician. He shows little interest until I ask about the monks of the Armenian order whose acquaintance I made in San Lazzaro. "As for them," he hesitates a moment and then decides to finish the sentence, "they are not out-and-out Armenians like ourselves, for they are more than half-way to Rome!" I see that I have been tactless.

Of course I ought to have remembered that there are schismatics among the Armenians. I cover up my blunder as best I may with a reference to Lord Byron's sojourn at the Armenian monastery in the Venetian lagoon.

Later, when I go to the great church beside the palace, I cannot at first see the patriarch. Altar and apse are hidden behind a crudely coloured curtain, but the rest of the building is thronged with worshippers of both sexes, and in the glaring sunshine that streams through the windows the Semitic type is much in evidence. (The patriarch is more conspicuously a Semite than the grand rabbi.) The congregation is excited and talkative, for this is Maundy Thursday, and they have come to enjoy the spectacle of the foot-washing. Now boys' voices, unaccompanied, are heard singing in choir — for the use of organ or other instruments in divine service is unknown in the East. They sing a very ancient Armenian air. Each time it is repeated, the voices sharpen slightly, grow shriller, since there are no bassi to steady them.

The curtain is drawn back, and the patriarch, in archiepiscopal vestments, is disclosed standing amid a half-circle of elderly priests. Chanting and gesture from this group to the congregation; impassioned responses from the body of the church; song of boys. This goes on for an hour. Then the patriarch kneels down to do the foot-washing. But whereas in Jerusalem and in Vienna the magnates of the Church are content to deal with a small number of selected old men, here old and young, priests and choir-boys, laymen of all grades, take the floor, and

the prince of the Church must spend a long, long time washing all the feet that are stretched out to him, while the primitive chant continues unendingly. This is a folk-church.

At the other end of Stamboul, close to the Golden Horn, I go to the ancient Patriarchal church of the Greeks, the home of the Eastern Orthodox faith. It is late in the evening, and very dark within, for the only illumination in the high and narrow fane comes from a few coloured lamps. The densely packed congregation is cut off from a large space by an iron railing, while the women sit apart in galleries, shadows behind gratings. In the large, fenced precinct stand the elect, the few, the priests. On a throne is a seated figure, a man clad in darkly-shining raiment. Any one who passes this throne, bends to kiss the steps leading up to it. The priest at the lectern, reading in Greek, addresses the throne, not the people. After tedious litanies, the candles in the huge silver candelabra are lighted, and I can discern the features of the patriarch. The head of a fanatic, knowledgeable, inexorable, dogmatic. He looks as defiantly mystical as the Church over which he holds sway, and reminds me of Pope Julius II.

Two priests stride towards him, kiss the steps, kiss the hem of his heavy robe, the hem which has a golden sheen like that on the mantle of a king in a Rembrandt picture. He stands up, comes slowly down the steps, and, without deigning to glance at the congregation, enters the apse and goes to the altar. This is cut off by the gilded bars of yet another grating, so that it is hardly

possible for the common people to see what their high priest is doing.

The cool aloofness of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the remoteness of the Roman pontiff saying mass, are less distant than the aloofness and the remoteness of this arch-prelate of the Eastern Church with his attendant priests. He is like those rigid mosaics which were let into the wall near his throne, after the faithful had hastily removed them from the cathedral of St. Sophia when the Turks conquered Byzantium.

The grand rabbi of Turkey (a man shrewd and up-to-date, holding an influential political position) had advised me to attend a little synagogue in a suburb beside the Bosphorus, in order to hear the ancient Hebrew melodies as rendered there with unusual fidelity by a choir of boys. These are the chorales which the Sephardic Jews brought from the East to Spain when they went thither with the Arabs, and thence carried to the Netherlands or whithersoever else persecution drove them — ultimately, therefore, back to the East, to Syria and Byzantium.

My first impression, however, is one of extreme baldness, when I mentally compare this Jewish ritual with the Christian services I have so recently attended. To begin with, there is no singing; and the absence of graven images heightens the feeling of jejuneness. Men wearing silken taliths fill the body of the synagogue; the women are behind a grating, as in the Greek church. The ringing voice of the precentor rises and falls as demanded by the tenor of the prayers. It is eight o'clock on a wet morning, and the dimness of the light

THE BAZAAR IN STAMBOUL

makes the scene doubly sombre. Near me the face of a venerable rabbi, very, very old, stands out in relief against the wall, and the movements of his lips show how earnestly he is participating.

Now a red curtain, broidered with silver, is drawn aside from a niche to disclose a cupboard. When this is opened, the congregation betrays an eager interest. Two tall silver vessels are taken from the cupboard, and, from amid costly wrappings, a double scroll is slowly and solemnly revealed. The priest holds it up to the congregation, and its appearance is hailed with loud acclamations. Here is something which the people always long for — a palpable symbol, a concrete object for worship; in this case, the Torah. Then the ancient story of the inauguration of the feast of the Passover is read from the scripture. At length, there rises the chorus of boys' voices (heard only in the synagogues of the Sephardic Jews) and I am amazed, for I am listening to the same rhythms and the same melodies that I listened to yesterday in the Armenian church, the same harsh, syncopated, unaccompanied chants, stimulating and primitive.

In Byzantium, among the churches, mosques, and synagogues venerated by the members of the various confessions, there is one which the hand of a great artist raised above the rivalry of the creeds.

When Justinian built it, his design was to provide for the God in whom he believed the highest possible witness of human devotion. Nigh on a thousand years passed away before fate willed that his image over the

portal and the images of Christian saints within should be removed, and since then, for nearly half another millennium, in the fane raised to the honour of the triune God, the followers of another prophet than his have lifted their arms to Allah. Never has the name of a temple proved more profoundly symbolic than that of St. Sophia, dedicated to supreme wisdom, for nowhere else are more rings housed beneath one dome.

Here in the early days of Christianity a Roman emperor set up columns which he had taken from the ruined temples of Greek gods, constraining these pillars from Artemis's temple at Ephesus to sustain the dome that was built in honour of Christ, her greatest enemy. Sublimely indifferent, the marble carries its alien burden.

But there is one column standing apart which cannot forget the old gods, and weeps. All through the centuries, drops have oozed from it, and the blind moisten their eyes with this precious water in the hope that they may enjoy the light of day again. Nearby is a great globe of marble, which in Pergamon had been sacred to Aphrodite. By the pious emperor's orders it was hollowed out to become a holy-water stoup — in which, now, devout Moslems wash the dust from their feet. Here and there, we can still see vestiges of the crosses which the Turks removed from the walls. There can still be traced among the golden mosaics the image of the Madonna and Child, and Mary is looking down as graciously and as sadly as of yore. Beside the holiest of the niches, the huge candlesticks of Christian days yet stand, and once a year the candles are lighted for an hour.

No other shrine is so quiet as St. Sophia, where footfalls are deadened by thick carpets. The mosque is full, for it is Friday. Every worshipper finds his allotted place, although there are no chairs in the vast interior; each spreads his praying-carpet in the appointed spot, so that the whole area is covered with eighteen thousand pieces of woven tissue. As the number of worshippers increases, their gestures seem to grow more uniform. Mohammedan prayer, characterised by reiterated prostrations, and by raising and lowering of the arms, produces a rhythmical impression, the priest playing the part of conductor. On a high throne, surmounted by a delicately carved canopy, stands the imam, scattering holy sand from Mecca.

Here, once more, the senses are starved: no music; no images; no banners. Yet the dome which rises above us is more splendid than any in the Western world. As I gaze up at it, I cannot but think of the architect who had dreamed of a dome no less magnificent for St. Peter's, and how, after his death, his plans were botched by two artists of world-wide reputation. That was why the dome of the great Roman cathedral became elliptical instead of circular, failing to dominate the interior.

In the dome of St. Sophia, into which we can look from every point of the interior, there is, at the very apex, a sun. Beneath this sun, to and fro across the dome, fly thousands of pigeons, cooing and nesting in nooks and corners, dying and multiplying, with no one to feed them, to tend them, or to bury them. The dome and the pigeons, this gracious vision and the cooing of the birds, make up for the lack of music and

of graven images. Once, at each angle, was figured a seraph, whose face, under the Mohammedan dispensation, has been blotted out and replaced by a golden star. But the figures are still those of angels, have perhaps become more vividly angelic through the change. When a creature spreads six great pinions amid which a golden star shines, is not that a seraph?

Is there, indeed, so wide a difference between the rings? Certainly here, in the precincts of Byzantium, these religions seem closely akin. From his throne the Sheik-ul-Islam blesses his flock in much the same way as the Greek Patriarch blesses the congregation; the ancient melodies sung by the boys in the Armenian church resemble those heard in the Sephardic synagogue; and the place of custody for the Jewish Torah has its replica in the apse where the Mohammedans have enshrined the Koran. Artemis of Ephesus handed over her columns to sustain the dome built by Byzantine Christians; and even though this dome arches to-day above the most stupendous of all the mosques, the Madonna contemplates the great escutcheons of Allah and his prophet and the pinions of the seraphim are uninjured.

I see three rings, not separate however, but interlinked, as in the armorial bearings of San Carlo Borromeo. It may well be that the present hour is auspicious, a more auspicious one than will recur for centuries. To-day the faithful of all the churches and all the temples and all the mosques are summoned to be tolerant, are summoned in the name of that great Sophia in

whose honour this freest of the world's cathedrals was built.

Darkness has fallen. The pigeons no longer circle overhead; the sun within the dome is hidden from sight; but lesser satellite suns have flared into being, and are slowly revolving on their own axes. The lamps of the massive candelabra have been lighted, luminaries which hang by cords attached to the margin of the dome, and are now gently swinging and gyrating. Some one draws back the heavy curtain beside which I am standing, and leads me forth. Putting on my shoes, I go out into twilit Byzantium.

As I pass down the marble steps of the mosque, a crouching figure emerges from the shadows, the same figure that I saw on the steps of the Jews and of the Christians. The same spectral figure stretches out its hand towards me.

It is the begging hand of a fellow-mortal.

Stone Coffins

Forty years ago, a wealthy Syrian landowner was having excavations made on his estate near Sidon, in search of building-stone. A good way down, his men came upon masonry. No one was surprised, for in this part of the world, where Phoenicians, Hittites, Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks left stratum superimposed on stratum, any one who turns up the ground with a spade is apt to find witnesses to the life of the past. But this was deeper than a spade could reach. Was it a buried town? A long shaft was driven, disclosing a city of the dead. Learned men came from afar, among whom was

a Turk who had the luck to discover some crypts which had been preserved almost uninjured. In the crypts were six-and-twenty huge sarcophagi, some of stone and others of marble, intact, as if placed there yesterday instead of two thousand years ago.

Experts have been studying these remains for years, and are still at odds as to whether the mausoleums were built by the rulers of Sidon during the sixth to the fourth century before Christ. Some of the tombs are hideous; others are superlatively beautiful. Among the latter is the Alexander sarcophagus, which is one of the chief treasures of the Imperial Ottoman Museum I am now visiting.

I have passed through lofty and brightly-lit rooms to enter the large though comparatively dark chambers where the sarcophagi are housed. Strong light is out of the question here, for some of these works of art are tinted, and would readily be bleached by the rays of the southern sun. As I study them, I cannot but be inspired with the awe and astonishment which must have filled the mind of their discoverer when, torch in hand, he first set eyes upon these masterpieces of Athenian art. The atmosphere of a modern museum has vanished. I feel that in the twilight I have entered a royal mausoleum, and this impression is heightened by the characteristics of the tombs.

Some of them are copies of Egyptian tombs. Others were brought to Sidon from Egypt, the inscriptions showing that, after two or three thousand years, the bodies of Egyptian kings had been dislodged from their resting-places to make room for the bodies of the kings

of Sidon. Fired by romanticist impulses or imperialist ambitions, the rulers of Sidon had had the sarcophagi carried northward from the land of the Nile, once a seat of world empire. Hundreds of slaves, toiling for months in the sun-scorched desert, had transported the ugly stone boxes to Sidon that dead kings might dream their last dreams in what had been the tombs of the Pharaohs. Stone mummy-cases, they clumsily outline the form of a sleeping man, and the illusion is strengthened by the carving of a human head on each. I speed away from these, to tombs that were sculptured at a later day.

Now, in the gloom, I discern forms which might be the models of Greek temples. At my request the kavass slowly draws back the dark-green curtains, and thereupon, in the bluish light reflected from the Bosphorus, are disclosed things of enduring beauty, Hellenic thoughts, classical lines.

The first thing to claim attention is a small Ionic temple in which the bones of a satrap rested. On the sides of this sarcophagus episodes of his life are represented in relief. We see him among his people, one of whom is mounting into the quadriga; there he is hunting; and there, again, he is reclining at a funeral banquet, his wife seated opposite him. All this resembles the Greek tombs preserved in London and Athens. We derive the impression that around the last resting-place of this hero and prince are sculptured representations of the supreme moments of his life; that his fierce moods and his merry ones, his dreams and

his ideals, are recorded there, as a memorial for his successors.

Who is sleeping in the sarcophagus surrounded by figures of mourning women? May we not suppose that he was a man of more delicate mould, a poet rather than a hero? That must be why these weeping women follow one another in an uninterrupted procession round his tomb.

More animated are the pictures of life that surround what is known as the Lycian sarcophagus. This is surmounted by a strangely tall, ogival lid. On one side are depicted men hunting the boar; on the other side, Amazons chasing a lion. There are battling centaurs; imperious, winged sphinxes; griffins snapping at one another as if in a witches' sabbath. One could fancy that the artist aimed at warning those of a future generation who should come to study his work, that their urgent will, likewise, would be annulled in a moment by the lapse of a single heart-beat. Thus tutored to moderation by these sculptured forms, the visitor slowly makes his way into the presence of perfection. He comes to the Alexander sarcophagus.

Those who, from youth upwards, have been familiar with drawings of these Attic reliefs, have been apt to forget how small an object they represent — to forget that they are not friezes from a temple, but only from the model of a temple. Thus when we see the original, our first impression is one of surprise that it is so small. At the same time, we are surprised by its colouring, and by its marvellous state of preservation. Most of the statues that have come down from classical days have

been dug out of rubbish-heaps. They are fragments, to which ruin lends a new beauty. But this sarcophagus, discovered in a mortuary crypt, is almost intact, being practically unrivalled in that respect among classical sculptures of the first rank, except for the Hermes at Olympia. In view of its admirable state of preservation, we have no scope for the imaginative exercise of reconstructing a damaged original in all its perfection. Here we are faced with the uneasy task of studying a Greek masterpiece quite unromantically, as it left the hand of the master.

The Alexander sarcophagus meets this great test admirably. Though, except for terra-cotta figurines from Tanagra, we have become accustomed to untinted statuary, we find the colouring of the sarcophagus perfectly natural, seeing that it is confined to the four reliefs which adorn this little white temple. Nor have we to strain our eyes to look up at it, as in the case of a lofty building. The reliefs are on a level with our eyes; we see them comfortably; we are simply looking at a large tomb.

The most impressive feature of the reliefs is the sense of order that emerges from amid so much vigorous movement. Although they depict a succession of hunting scenes and battle scenes, they display a rhythmical repetition, a parallelism, such as we see in the friezes on the pyramids and in Hodler's "Eurhythmia." On one side we see naked Macedonians fighting and overcoming clothed Persians. Limbs are intertwined with limbs; hands seem to grow from beneath the head of a man lying prone, every finger distinct; prisoners groan open-

mouthed. Through it all, parallelism dominates. We see a succession of single combats and beneath each fighting pair a man lies slain or in the death-throes. In the hunt, too, on the other long side of the temple, movement is reduced to a formula; the lion is biting the horse's chest, the dog is biting the lion's leg, and the hunter is gripping a stag by the antlers. Wherever men or beasts have been wounded, the marble is stained red.

Who rested in this tomb? What was the name of the man whose great deeds entitled him to so splendid a mausoleum? It was not Alexander of Macedon. Although the sarcophagus is called by his name, that is only because he appears in both the great sculptured scenes, because his familiar face is conspicuous, hunting on one side, fighting on the other. The coffin may have been that of a friend or follower, of a satrap or successor of Alexander, who had the great Macedonian's image chiselled on his tomb. Some authorities consider that the battle scene commemorates Arbela, while others decide in favour of Issus. Some hold that the tomb is that of Abdalonymus, whom Alexander made king of Sidon; others that one of the diadoches was buried here; while yet others incline to the view that the sarcophagus was that of one of the last Phoenician kings, who were vassals of the Persians. Disputes of the learned! Perhaps the kavass knows! He is motioning me towards a corner of the room.

He draws away the red cloth which covers a long glass case. In it there lies, hideous and ludicrous, a mummy. By signs the janitor indicates that this was found in

the sarcophagus. I glance from the enwrapped and mouldering remnant of humanity to the marble masterpiece fashioned by the artist long ago. The mummy is nothing more than the dust of mortality; the tomb is endowed with the immortality of art.

Silently the old man redraws the dark-green curtains.

Dumb Walls

The tunic of the decrepit kavass who shows visitors through the crypts of the Byzantine fortress is still resplendent with gold lace; and amid the ruined walls he still plays the castellan, as if he had been accustomed to squire visitors there for centuries. As of yore, it would seem, he regards himself as chamberlain of the palace. When he clambers up the broken turret stair, or points to the moss-grown interior of the State prison, he mingles with a display of Oriental ceremony the quaint importunacy of the harlequin who tries to make incomprehensible words intelligible with the aid of emphatic gestures. A strange old fellow, who has failed to realise the decay of the glories he is guarding — such is the custodian of the dumb walls.

Fifteen hundred years they have stood, these walls that protected Byzantium on the landward side. For countless nights the sea wind has whistled through their mortarless crannies; for countless mornings the sun has shone with inexhaustible energy into the dungeons, bringing false hopes to the captives. What the old custodian tries to explain by signs and gestures is the history of bloody vengeance, cruel tortures, complicated executions — dim memories from the days of the

Byzantine empire; more recent memories from the days of the sultans and the janissaries. Here, where the wall which protected ancient Byzantium and the later Stamboul against the sea, met the land wall at a sharp angle, the emperors and the sultans built their strongest fortress, Yedi-Kuleh, the Seven Towers.

With a huge lantern of antique pattern, the old man throws light upon the walls, enabling me to read the Latin inscriptions graven on the pitiless stone two or three centuries ago, by the captive envoys of Venice, France, and Germany. One pictures the poor prisoners lying on the flagstones at the bottom of this huge roofless tower, looking upward at night towards the stars, which shone down brightly as if into the depths of a well, and brought, with their pure rays, the solace of hope.

Beside these mute witnesses of slavery, power rears its head. Ten thousand slaves built a triumphal gate for Theodosius, when he had overthrown his rival Maximus. The sea wind, beating ever on one side of these towers, has yellowed them on that side and worn holes and grooves in the surface; whereas the landward side is still smooth and white as on the day of the triumph. But this entrance, famous in the ancient world as the Golden Gate, became in later years no more than a fragment of the town wall, and can only be separated from it by the investigatory eye. Furthermore, the wall itself has long since been useless, ruinous.

Once more my eyes turn away from the grass-clad rampart of one of the seven towers, towards the sea, beside which the vast city lies extended in a semicircle.

Over there, blue under the noontide sun, are Princes' Islands; and beyond them the mountains of Asia Minor rise skyward. Those birds with white and shining wings, flying from the sea towards the ancient towers, must be gulls.

Ere long, among the white birds from the sea appear black crows from the land. The farther landward we walk along the line of these ancient walls, the more sombre grows the aspect of the chain of ruined fortresses. For two leagues, from the Sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn, the road runs along the wall, passing tower after tower, nearly a hundred in all, built of huge blocks of stone, shattered by earthquakes, again and again rebuilt, strengthened by new trenches and outworks.

The tops of gnarled fig-trees project here and there above the masonry; ashes, too, with their vigorous and regular growth, thrust their boughs from tower and from trench; in groups, in bosquets, in little groves, tall, silent, and hortatory, cypresses grow — for here, just outside the wall, the inhabitants of Stamboul have for centuries buried their dead. The gravestones are awry; many of them have fallen; pale-gold lettering on green tablets, in a script mysterious to me, records the names of vanished mortals. Numberless black crows fly and hop among the tombs. In the huge trench which aforetime protected the capital of the world, veiled women are chopping at the stumps of cypresses, robbing these stumps of the shoots which are the last evidences of a stubborn vitality. The trees were planted in honour of the dead, but they have to serve

the needs of the living poor. Packing their spoil into sacks, and stooping beneath their burdens, the veiled women make their way back to their hovels.

Now the line of the wall is interrupted by a great gate. It is the gate of St. Romanus, or Top-Kapu, where stone cannon-balls are still to be seen, in commemoration of a day which was a turning-point in the history of the world. On May 29, 1453, the janissaries of Mohammed the Conqueror made a desperate attack upon Byzantium, which they had long been besieging. Not until Justiniani, the Genoese leader of the imperial troops, had been struck down dangerously wounded, were the Turks able to make their way in through an unguarded entry. Thereupon the last of the Byzantine emperors himself took the field at the head of his best troops, and attempted to drive them back. With the death of Constantine XI, Christian Greece passed under the sway of Mohammed. The mutilated corpse of the emperor was found afterwards amid a heap of the slain.

Only by his purple sandals was it possible to recognise Constantine Paleologus, the last emperor of Byzantium.

Le Bon and the Porter

The real name is Lebon & Bourdon. Westerners call it Le Bon for short. This little restaurant is in the busiest part of Pera Street. Here those from western Europe can feel at home, surrounded by shops of the familiar kind, by western schools, and western clubs. On one of the walls of the restaurant, spring and autumn are depicted in coloured tiles; the other wall, where

winter and summer should be, is blank. Smartly dressed ladies of the European colony forgather, eat dainty cakes, and enjoy themselves. The Westerners in Constantinople make it a point of honour to mix as little as possible with the natives. Nor do they mingle freely one with another, for they break up into little cliques, and this is especially true of the Germans. Furthermore, each colony is segregated by class distinctions, occupation, and so on, with an exclusiveness which even those who practise it admit to be absurd.

The main object would seem to be to escape from the East, and to live a life as much as possible like that of western Europe. In the Pera Palace Hotel and in the clubs, you will find, during the luncheon interval and in the evenings, attachés, consular staffs, banking employés, teachers, engineers, all of them keeping sedulously apart. The only link between them, the only person free from national and class prejudices, the head-waiter, is a Greek. He knows them all, sees through them all, despises them, exploits their weaknesses, and keeps his own counsel.

Leaving the tall houses and noisy streets of Pera, leaving this imposture of an Eastern city, this would-be Paris, I stride over the Bridge of the Nations, crossing the Golden Horn towards the city of minarets and domes, towards Stamboul. In front of me, tottering under his load, walks a porter, carrying a large case. As I overtake him, I see that he is a vigorous old man with a closely trimmed white beard, and I note that his face is reddened by his exertions. He pants as he carries the treasure which Europe is sending to the East, across the

Bridge of the Nations. I follow him, accompanied by the sea wind which drives the gulls across the harbour and over the city as far as the Valideh Mosque, where the pigeons nest.

The porter turns into an alley beside the harbour; in an instant I find myself in the East, which I have vainly sought in the sophisticated streets of Pera. In the East, with its sounds, its smells, its sights. From obscure corners, the cries of the street-vendors reach my ear; pungent whiffs from the arches of the vegetable market assail my nostrils, mingled with the dry, salty smell of newly caught fish; and my eyes are refreshed by a play of vivid colours.

Nevertheless, this is not a dream out of the Thousand and One Nights, such as may be dreamed even to-day in the alley-ways of Damascus. The heat and burden of the day are evident here, and the inertia of the Orient would seem to have been troubled by the exigencies of commerce. My guide, whom I do not know and who does not know that he is guiding me, moves along beneath golden-yellow fronts of ancient houses, threads the network of uneven passages. As he goes before me, I see the box he carries standing out in relief against backgrounds of shining water; for it seems as if the Golden Horn (truly golden beneath the noontide sun) had sucked up these little alleys into its great highway of light after filling them with all the products of sea and seafaring, with all sorts and conditions of men and of beasts.

Now the porter has reached the bazaar, and makes as if to cross it. Old men, wearing turbans, squat in

front of their booths, silent, not troubling to offer their wares to the passer-by, though he might be a purchaser. Here, in the innermost parts of the bazaar, where no foreigner comes in search of carpets, weapons, or precious stones, there seems to be scant eagerness to sell. The stores consist of everything which a Turk can want. Melons from Thrace are stacked in pyramids. Grapes from Anatolia fill hundreds of baskets; and these baskets, covered with vine leaves, are stacked in piles. The grapes project here and there, golden as the hair of Veronese's women. Veiled figures stretch out their hands for pomegranates, strung together in garlands. A lad lies asleep behind a mountain of golden yellow quinces. Rugs and sacks are piled tier upon tier in two rows to form a street, and between the rows sit young fellows sewing more sacks. Wool and cotton are being combed with antiquated implements, and the products of the combing are packed into bales which tower on either hand.

The porter goes on his way through a motley crowd composed of persons from many nations. I hear words in different tongues, all equally obscure to me. Once again I think, as I have so often thought before, that the races of the East are, by a common touch of melancholy in glance and tone, united into a wiser community than the optimism of the West has ever achieved.

At length the porter halts in front of one of the booths. Crouching on his haunches, he lowers the case from his back on to the threshold. The stall is that of a public writer, perhaps a notary in a small way of business, and it is to him that the burden has been brought. Seated

pen in hand in the open doorway, the young man raises his eyes from the paper on which he is writing, and tells the old man to open the box. While his order is being obeyed, his pen continues to move slowly from right to left over the paper which, as he jots down his thoughts, comes to resemble a Persian carpet, beautifully shaped letters falling from his quill like lovely flowers. Removing numerous wrappings, the porter at length extracts an irregularly shaped angular machine out of the box, and places a typewriter in front of his master. The scrivener turns eagerly to examine his new acquisition, touches the keys, and would seem, from the brightness in his eyes, to be turning over in his mind a number of fresh plans inspired by the receipt of this contrivance from the West.

"Soon" — thus we may suppose the young Turk's thoughts to run — "soon I shall be able to write French, and perhaps German as well. I shall get more clients. In due time, by the mercy of Allah, I shall become a great lawyer, and shall be able to remove across the Golden Horn, to the place where much money can be made, where sweet music is to be heard, where lovely women clad in silk dresses and wearing high-heeled shoes hold sway, in the fine houses of Pera, in the tiled room of Le Bon."

Recovering his breath, the old man continues to sit on the threshold, mopping the sweat from throat and chest. He gazes gloomily along the narrow alley-way. It has been hard work carrying the box for a league. He is out of humour at sight of the contraption he has brought from Europe.

"So this, then, is to make Master's fortune?" thinks the old porter. "They keep on sending us machines, nothing but machines! I am old, and these things move too quick for me. How much longer shall I go on bringing machines across the bridge?"

Above the Seas

At the end of a little valley on the Asiatic coast of the Bosphorus a grey dragon lies sleeping. On three sides, the hills shelter him from the breeze, but he shakes and quivers a little when gusts blow up the valley. Nearby, in the meadow, are twenty diminutive tents, keeping watch over him, ranged in a row. A petroleum engine, too, has been set up in this out-of-the-way spot; lying on the ground are red cylinders looking like explosive shells; and close to them, coiled up, is something which resembles a huge yellow snake. Couchant camels, twenty or thirty of them, are sniffing superciliously close at hand.

We ride nearer. The master of the dragon calls an order. Men come forth from the tents, run up to the monster, and handle him roughly, as if to wake him. Hardly have they removed the heavy bags of sand with which his master has weighted him down, than he awakens, strains upward, and makes as if wished to rise into the air.

Into the air! As the sand-bags are taken away, the balloon tugs at the cords which are held by a hundred hands and are attached to the net which covers it in. Now the great yellow serpent uncoils itself, and crawls towards the belly of the dragon. There is a hissing

noise. The snake is feeding the dragon. The more the dragon swells, the more strenuously does he endeavour to rise. Hastily, lest he should escape, they fasten a wire rope to his breast. Snap! Now he is held fast. Everything is done feverishly, as if there were great haste, and indeed he is in a fever to rise. Next, two thin wires are attached to him, a red one and a white one; they will be his ears.

The camels are restless. Hitherto they have been the largest beasts in the landscape, and they look morosely at the giant. Words I cannot understand are shouted. I am in a world of fable, far away in the East.

At length, from the belly of the dragon, I see an everyday sort of basket dangling. It is as commonplace as the wicker chairs on the terrace of my own house. Jump in quickly! Once more an order is given in an unknown tongue. Those who are holding the cords let go and step backwards, looking at us. Are we under a spell, that they stare at us in this way? What is the dragon overhead going to do?

He is rising. The captive balloon rises gently, slowly, without a jar. Someone shouts from below, a question in the unknown tongue, in which my companion shouts an answer. Have I been trepanned in the perilous East? Have I been handed over to the tender mercies of the dragon?

Around me the hills are sinking down in the light of the noontide sun; the earth has fallen away beneath me, silently, smoothly. The jinnee rises without effort, without the clatter made by the airplane and the airship; and uplifted by him we swing in a frail

basket amid the blue heavens. Shall we fly up to the sun?

No, for an iron cord, thin but strong, binds the dragon to the earth. Slowly this cord is being unwound from the iron windlass, and I can no longer hear the motor which makes the windlass turn. Soon we can see over the hills. A broad and shining strip has become visible, not straight, but bent, three times, five times. As we rise into the blue on this perfect afternoon the ribbon becomes clearer, more sharply outlined. It is the Bosphorus, for at either end it expands into a sea. That one to the west, a white mirror, calm, unruffled, with three islands showing on its surface, is the Sea of Marmora, its name being derived from the marble of the islands. The sea that lies to the east of us, huge, stormy, dark, and threatening, well deserves its name of the Black Sea. Far off, on both these seas, ships are gliding through the clear waters and the dark; but to me it seems as if they were gliding, like myself, through the blue heavens. Are we not all alike floating in the ether, the ships on the severed seas and I?

Only beneath me, only in the Bosphorus, is the world of reality. There, too, I can see tiny ships, their sails bellying in the wind. Some of them are making their way towards the bright sea, and others towards the dark one; some of them sail towards calm, others towards storm. On the shores of the Bosphorus — white specks in the green hills — are towns and villages; fortresses emerge from the rocks, ancient ruined towers; I see gardens with meandering paths. Over there, on the far shore of the blue band, lies the huge city, with its

domes and its minarets, its cypresses and its palaces, its vast extent of habitations a-sparkle in the sunshine.

That is Byzantium, betwixt her seas; Byzantium, round which for thousands of years the nations have thronged, because she reigns as empress amid the waters.

Above two seas, and above Byzantium, I hover in the little basket. Down there men are working and ruling, brains are thinking, but no eye dominates the imperial city so commandingly as does mine at this moment; and, as I continue to rise slowly in the swinging basket of my dreams, it seems to me as if, for a few seconds, I were holding the scales of universal history in my hands, and were able to ensure that the pointer shall come to rest between two continents.

I hear a voice. My companion is holding converse with those on earth. He gives me the instrument, that I, too, may listen. I comply for a moment; then quickly hand back to him this thing which ties us to the earth. Where was I but a moment ago?

Too late. My companion waves a flag, and, with a slight jerk, our ascent through space ceases. The bond is tightened. I feel myself being drawn down. On the slope opposite, a shadow sinks with us, a tiny shadow aping the movements of the dragon overhead, the monster I had forgotten. There he is imaged, the jinnee who has been lifting us. Now his master is calling him back to earth. The tents are nearer. They were but points. Now they look like the little castles which children build on the sand of the sea shore. I

JOURNEY IN ANATOLIA

hear a rattling noise as the wire rope is wound up inexorably. The machine which drives the windlass is eating up my dream, as gods withdraw the gift of beauty after bestowing it on mortals.

What has become of the two seas? Where is the watery road which unites them? The green hills have risen between me and them, and I hear human voices, unwelcome. Men run up to seize us, as the crowd always tries to seize what has fallen after a lofty flight. They grasp the dream basket, drag it down earthward, pull it into their world of turmoil. They are like prison warders, locking a captive again in his cell, after letting him have half an hour's run to give him the illusion of freedom.

"Was it clear? Did you get a good view?" asks a tiresome voice. "Yes, there was no shaking." — "New type." — "Cotton." — "Lucky there were no squalls." — "You see, we have a light railway to bring up the gas cylinders. You can hardly believe what a difficult job it was to assemble the little motor which drives the windlass!"

The master of the dragon stands watching his men dismantling the monster. This latter is weary, and settles down to sleep once more. The one hour in which he comes to life, the hour when, partly freed from the spell, he can mount into the blue sky, is over. He will sleep until the morrow.

Looking at his prostrate form, I muse:

"Light railway? Cotton? Gas? Surely a moment ago I was air-lord of Byzantium, high above the two seas of my capital?"

Retrospect

The steamship has cast off from Europe and is heading for Asia. We are in the middle of the Bosphorus, near Leander's Tower. Among the minarets and towers which make up the city I am leaving, I see, in the morning light, houses and roofs and corners which for me are full of memories.

That corner of the five-storied hotel, that upper window, was mine for five weeks. Always when I am in a great city I like to live in some lofty spot whence, day by day, I can get a good view over the town: in Rome, on the Capitol; in Paris, near the Sacré-Cœur; in London, high above the Thames. Every morning at Stamboul, I witnessed a struggle.

When day was dawning, it would seem to me as if I were standing above the centre of a measureless expanse of vapour. Only the nearest houses loomed through the fog. The cypresses in the cemetery were tenuous shades; the waters of the Golden Horn were all but invisible, nothing more than a semicircle of opaline mist, through which the spectral outline of a cruiser could be dimly seen. Behind lay a thick cloudbank, dense, impenetrable. One might have thought that the sea lay beneath it, save that above it five domes, widely separated, were showing. These domes were the first things to glint in the uncertain light. Rays reflected from their windows pierced the vapours like God's eyes. That, in truth, is what they were, for they were the eyes of mosques, the habitations of Allah. Two minarets rose likewise through the haze. Then would come

fugitive peeps of roofs, giving the whole prospect an appearance of mirage.

Thus, in the early morning, do the watery powers which envelop Byzantium wrestle with the stony energies of the town. Since a contest tends to grow more and more complicated, and the moment comes when friend and foe are inextricably intermingled, the vapours are blown aloft, as if to swallow up God's houses; but as the sun rises God's eyes shine more brilliantly through the mist. This is the decisive moment in the struggle between light and darkness. The fog grows more transparent, and the sea of cloud begins to flow away from the compact masses of the stony town.

Half an hour later, morning after morning, Byzantium in all its manifold variety, in all its momentous beauty, lay distinct and palpable at my feet, victorious over the powers of darkness. Now I could see the gardens, the hills, the cypresses, the serried ranks of houses, extending eastward to Seraglio Point. The blue waters of the Golden Horn were clearly visible, and on them were lying numerous ships, great and small, loading or unloading, anchoring or getting under way. I could see the busy life on the great bridge, could watch the coming and going of men and horses, of camels and donkeys. So lofty was my eyrie that I could make out the whole plan of Stamboul, could see the outlines of the peninsula on which the town stands. Eastward I could descry the entrance to the Bosphorus, and Asia, whither I am now steaming. Only part of Scutari, the great barracks of Haidar Pasha, and a few cypresses — but they were in Asia.

Meanwhile, the sirens on shipboard had begun their morning hymn; drivers were shouting; traders were calling their wares; and the poor beasts, footing it to their cruel end in the slaughter-house, were lowing and bleating. The loudest of all the morning noises was that of the signals; this strident sound continued for hours. Like shining balls of light they hissed skyward, flew across the water, and fell therein — the water of the Golden Horn which separates the two parts of the city, or the water of the Bosphorus which separates the two continents. It seemed as if there were nothing but signals left in the world.

Soon we shall reach Haidar Pasha, where the journey into Asia begins. The Bosphorus is widening into the Sea of Marmora, and Princes' Islands rise out of the blue. The third of them is the one on which I passed the most radiant of Easter mornings.

The name had lured me. Antigoni. It was, in very truth, a Greek island; not because it was now inhabited by Greeks, but because of its aspect, and because of the seraphic blueness of the morning seascape out of which it rose. The church I entered seemed, indeed, rather pagan than Christian. There was a horrid clamour of bells. Attached to a scaffolding in front of the church were three bells, which lads were striking with their knuckles and with hammers, were kicking, too, so that the noise pervaded the church. Within, candles were burning in the bright sunlight, and children were extinguishing them and relighting them, while the priest sang unheeding. The floor was green, strewn

with laurel leaves. There were laurel wreaths over the ikons. Great sprays of wisteria adorned the pulpit and the screen. The women were wearing brightly coloured summer gowns and embroidered kerchiefs.

I wandered off towards the summit of the island, through a deserted pine wood. Here I came upon a clearing from which there was an extensive view over the sea. Opposite me lay Byzantium, with its domes and its bridges, its ships and its cypresses, a city built on seven hills like Rome, and disposed in a semicircle round a gulf like Naples. Among the flowers in the clearing lay numerous pieces of Roman marble, beside the fragments of a ruined chapel. I sat me down on a Corinthian capital, amid ivy and wild roses.

Here may once have sat Antigonus, the young prince after whom, some say, the island was named; the son of a bloodthirsty Byzantine emperor who banished the lad hither. But perhaps the island was called after Antigone, empress of Byzantium, who is also said to have been exiled hither, and to have spent the remainder of her life gazing at forbidden Byzantium. According to a third legend, the place takes its name from another Antigonus, one of Alexander's generals. If he stood here, it must have been with his back turned upon Byzantium, for he must have faced towards Bithynia, towards Nicaea and Iconium, his leader's objectives.

Rising from my seat upon the capital, I turned it over with difficulty, wishing to examine it more closely. Out of the moist earth where it had been lying so long, hundreds of black worms wriggled forth, twining and writhing like Medusa's locks.

ON ASIA'S MARGE

Troy — Smyrna — The City of the Kings — An Arabian Banquet — A Dream of Damascus

ON ASIA'S MARGE

Troy

A BLACK shape loomed on the quay. Shadowy forms were at work upon it in the darkness, affixing a tilt to the old country cart. We crept underneath this tilt, and the vehicle rattled off into the cold, starry night.

My mind was filled with eager anticipation. At length I was about to see with the eyes of the flesh all those things upon which my imagination had dwelt so fondly since childhood. Names from the Homeric poems seemed to mingle with the noise of the trotting hoofs, and a ghostly company followed us through the night.

When day dawned, we found ourselves on a broad tableland. Down the hill to meet us came a train of camels, their humps showing in black silhouette against the rising sun. The camel-drivers marched beside them, guiding the strange creatures from time to time by pulling on the cord which united them in a string. Each of these great beasts bore a heavy burden; and they moved so swiftly that the little donkeys which formed part of the caravan were hard put to it to keep up with them.

I did not really make out the shape of our cart until I had alighted from it in the morning. A young Armenian, handsome as one of Giorgione's shepherds, was standing beside the horses which he had been driv-

ing along precipitous roads throughout the night. He wore an orange turban and a blue coat. Quitting the road, we set out across the fields, making our way through a treeless and hilly countryside, beset with thistles and brightened with flowers. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were grazing here and there, to the accompaniment of tinkling bells. The herdsman, muffled in a gaily stitched cloth, was sitting by a rivulet, bathing his feet. As I walked, I picked some of the poppies which have been growing here for countless ages, the poppies which yield a mysterious juice that creates fancies like those enshrined in the verses of Homer.

As we mounted, the sea came into view once more. Ruffled by the breeze of this spring morning, it stretched round the cape on which Kum Kaleh stands. From the European coast on the other side of the Dardanelles rose the ancient tower of Sedil Bahr, and behind it showed the rocks of the Chersonese. Beyond were the mountainous islands of Imbros and Samothrace. Westward, across the sea, rose the smooth cone of Tenedos. From a mountain chain to the south of us one peak projected high above the rest; the hill of Zeus, Mount Ida. These classical names brought with them the witchery of Hellas, but the illusion of antiquity was broken by the ugly Turkish names of the villages through which we passed. Still, when we reached Hissarlik, I knew that we were close to our goal.

Incredibly lonely is this wonderful spot. It is not easy to find. The herdsmen of the neighborhood were unable to give our guide any indications. There is no

tablet to mark the place; no sign to direct the traveller's footsteps. He gropes hither and thither, following his instincts, and at length happens upon the site, which imagination peoples with palaces and fortresses. A ruined wall or two, and some heaps of rubbish — naught else to distinguish it from the country around; and one would hardly dream of looking for anything notable here were it not for the stimulating example of the great German who made such astounding discoveries at Hissarlik.

Indeed, my first thought at sight of these disinterred walls was not of Priam, but of Schliemann, whom I knew in my early youth, for he was a friend of the family, and it was in his person that I first learned to revere human intelligence and artistic faculty. By perseverance, aided with the powers of a vigorous imagination, the man who to begin with had been nothing more than an errand-boy promoted to the station of correspondence clerk, became the discoverer of Troy. The Homeric poems in his hands, he found a way where the pundits had contemptuously said there was none. "I did nothing remarkable; I believed in Homer, that was all." Such was his simple version of his exploits. He believed, and acted on his faith. Waving a magic wand, he bade the meadows open, and from the chasm he resurrected the ancient walls, brought back Priam's treasure into the light of day — after, in true Odyssean fashion, he had put his Greek soldiers to sleep with sweet wine.

By degrees the eye grows accustomed to the characteristics of the various strata, begins to note their several

differences, and distinguishes a peculiarly grooved corner, recurring again and again, as typical of the Mycenaean wall. Now that I know where I am, I can find my way about, and soon identify Priam's room and hearth.

Looking up out of a trench half filled with rubble, I see three crab-apple trees stencilled against the sky. The middle one of the three dominates the fore-court of the ancient fortress. The trees are in flower. Climbing upon the wall, I break off a spray of blossoms. As they rustle in the all-pervading stillness, they make me aware of the unceasing recurrence of this force of blossoming amid the dumb melancholy of the ruins.

Looking seaward over the wall of Priam, I see the mortuary mound of Achilles, and farther to the west that of Ajax. The winding stream that disappears in the distance is Scamander. Behind me I feel the power radiating from Mount Ida, the hill of Zeus. This stone in my hand, the stone I have loosed from the wall that, like a crusader, I may take it home with me as a token to place in the garden of my distant house beside the lake — this stone helped to build the wall of the room where Helen slept with Paris, Helen whose sin led to the Ten Years' War. This was where Priam stood when the shaft of light pierced through a slit into a dark tower; and when, looking out through the slit, he saw the ships of the detested Greeks, who were slaughtering one son after another of his hundred sons because of his son Paris's errant passion. Almost in the same waters where those Greek forces sailed in ancient days, but a little farther eastward, were lying only a few years ago

the ships of that other island people which is fond of comparing itself to the Hellenes. They were ships of a different build, armed with different weapons, but the men who manned them, the seamen, the warriors, were of the same build as the Hellenes of thousands of years ago.

The circle is complete. Out of these walls, sublime though ruined, rises the ghost of war long past, a war which was greater than all subsequent wars because a great poet sang its glories. Imagination guided by knowledge builds bridges over space and time, so that our thoughts flit swiftly from the siege of Troy and the anger of Achilles to the British cruiser cleared for action. Soaring on high, the mind traverses the plains of history, descries citadels, heroes, women, battlefields; suns itself in the noontide of the present; flies back again into the distant past; weightless metal.

While I ponder the fate of Agamemnon and the other great commanders in that memorable struggle, I am led to ask myself when there will arise a singer of our own war, capable of freeing it from the bonds which bind it to the earth. What cause will he fable for it, what cause as potent as the abduction of the lovely Helen? Are we no more than degenerate offspring, whose deeds cannot rival their dreams? What power of the human mind can compare with that of the minstrel who, with masterful gesture, chooses one fortress out of a thousand, and makes that one immortal? The famous German archaeologist, labouring patiently, discovered five strata in all, some of them above and some of them below the Mycenaean. Who cares a jot for any of them except

this one, hallowed for all subsequent generations because Homer sang it? Lovingly I caress the stone that formed part of a wall which only the cunning of an Odysseus could overthrow.

Influenced by the magic of the place, at one and the same time I live in that remote primeval age and in this actual hour which is passing as I sit on Priam's flower-decked wall. Beside me, above me, the apple-tree waves its blossoming branches in the air.

Smyrna

When, after a peaceful voyage lasting days and nights, a new land rises above the horizon — mountains, clearings, forests — landing seems to me no more than a stimulating interruption, the drawing of a breath betwixt wave and wave; for the coasts are full of petty things, and only the sea is wide. Heralded by a thousand lights, a city beneath a hill appears, and I could fancy myself in Venice. Is not this Mestre? Across the bay stretches a long mole; the flicker of Venetian lights is renewed; there is a smell of seaweed and salt-marsh; and, like a bird of prey slowly alighting, a train passes in a great semicircular sweep round the town before entering it.

Strategically considered, Smyrna is exceptionally favoured among seaports by its situation. Two great arms of land stretch westward into the Aegean to shelter this bay, which three millenniums ago the Aeolians regarded as predestined to be the chief port of Asia Minor. Being the finest of all the havens on the west

coast of the peninsula, it has always been a bone of contention among the nations; and the names of Gyges and Alexander, of Marcus Aurelius and Tamerlane, mark milestones in the history of Smyrna. The Osmanlis spoke of it as "the eye of Asia Minor"; the Romans called it "the premier town of Asia"; while the Greeks were content to extol it as it deserved when they declared it to have been the birthplace of Homer.

In a spacious hall, a number of people were waiting for the vali and his attendants. Most of them were women, veiled, poorly dressed, women and their children.

Hard by, among the trees, another black-draped woman was squatting beside a great piece of marble, on which numerous figures were carven in relief. I drew near to examine it, for the marble was beautiful, it was Grecian marble. Where did this fragment come from? And those others, close at hand? There were six or eight pieces of broken marble, parts of a frieze it would seem; the marble yellowed, like that which has lain in the waters of Tiber. On enquiry I learned that they had been disinterred at Teos. The veiled Turkish woman was sitting beside part of a frieze adorned with centaurs, which had once embellished the temple of Dionysus. She assumed, for me, the lineaments of a mænad bewailing the destruction of the place whence Anacreon had come. She mourned because the frieze set up in honour of Bacchus was broken, and the wine-inspired songs of his worshippers were no longer heard in the land.

Spring is well advanced in the valleys round Smyrna, the town of myrrh; for spring is swift of foot in these latitudes. Winter's storms were still raging when I left Constantinople a few days ago, so it amazes me here to see wisteria already in bloom, earlier even than in Florence, where it does not flower until the end of March. In general, the country round Smyrna reminds me of Florence. There are olives and cypresses, high walls and flowers, flowers galore; and the town is backed by a tall rampart of hill, like the upland where Fiesole stands. The many-domed town of Smyrna lies as if in a shell. Even when one has climbed Mount Pagus, it is hard to make sure that the waters beneath are part of the sea, so landlocked is the bay. On either side stretch broad plantations of oranges and figs. There are vineyards, too; but the vines are close-cropped, are dwarf vines, growing near to the ground without the support of staves, sending forth new shoots out of old wood. They will bear yellow grapes, the raisins of Smyrna.

In the fields, numberless sheep are pastured. While I listen to their bleating, while I watch the lambs at play and the ewes contentedly browsing, my coachman tells me of the different qualities of the fleeces. The ruins of lofty aqueducts tower above the brooks. The valleys whence these waters flow bear romantic names, unknown to the learned, but cherished in the hearts of the people. My driver knows them all. "The Valley of Elijah the Prophet" is spanned by the great arch of an aqueduct built in Byzantine days — unless, as some say, it goes back to Alexander. From the masonry high, very high above the stream, thousands of star-

shaped flowers project, beyond the reach of men, growing where they grew when Alexander passed this way.

For two thousand years no one has been able to pick them.

That same evening, while I examined some carpets in the bazaar, their wonderful colours recalled to my mind the sheep I had seen in the afternoon, the sheep whose ancestors were shorn to provide the wool for these carpets.

In our stirring times, moral problems continually force themselves on our attention. Again and again we have to ask ourselves whether beauty can only be achieved by the sacrifice of living creatures, whether power can only be sustained by the sacrifice of beauty? Must a hundred dumb beasts shiver to make a carpet? Must millions of men, caught in the toils of war, perish for the sake of an idea which may be erroneous? Strange, is it not, that the West should continually force its doctrines on the East, supply it with soldiers, and with big guns; that the West, instead of trying to weaken the East, should furnish the East with the elements it needs for the renewal of its ancient powers, should provide it with all that will make it a menace to the West?

Beside the frieze from the temple of Dionysus, the frieze on which centaurs are depicted fighting for power as the nations fight for power to-day, the black-veiled Turkish beggar-woman is sitting. But high up on the ancient arch the starry flowers bloom in their white

purity, at no cost of sacrifice, and for the fulfilment of no purpose save their own.

No one can pluck them.

The City of the Kings

Here, where the armies of all ages made their way into the East, where the Assyrians broke trail for Alexander, and where German emperors with the cross and Osmanlis with the crescent followed, here on the ancient highway of Asia Minor, we find the vestiges of great wars, traces of the coming and going of huge armies, but seldom the vestiges of battles. The wilder the chaos of the present in this part of the world, the more sublime is the aspect of these memorials of the heroic past that are left standing upon the furrowed soil.

As I journey through the restless East, my mind comes back ever and again to the thought that in Asia such signs of earlier struggles reach much farther back than with us in Europe; and I am impressed with the way in which, amid the disorders of the present, the ancient foci of war glow with new fires.

To travel from Constantinople to Aleppo takes more than a week. We spend four days on the railway, and four on horseback or in a carriage, since the Bagdad railway is still unfinished over the high passes. On the virgin hills we see here and there huge frameworks of iron, parts of the viaducts in course of construction. Useless though they are to him, the traveller is glad to see them there, for it is only at the construction works, among the engineers and their staff, that he can find shelter in these fertile but thinly populated mountains.

So sparse is the population, that the countryside is almost deserted. The rolling upland extends indefinitely, covered with fields and meadows. Horses, oxen, and camels are grazing there, masterless to all seeming, for the huts of the peasants are hidden in copses. One could fancy that the corn was self-planted; or that God Almighty had sown the furrows carefully, just as He has carelessly besprinkled the hills and the hangers with white starry flowers. For hour after hour, our caravan made its way onward without catching sight of a cottage. Even from the tops of the passes, where there was an extensive view, the villages that could be seen were few in number; and they were so far from the main body of the fields that I am sure no Western peasant, not even a Sicilian, would consent to traverse such distances to and from his daily work. Where the road crosses a river, you will find a "khan." There you will meet other caravans, and will be able to pass the time of day; there you will find a host and his servants, but ne'er a peasant will you see. Now and again, from the road, you may observe the silhouette of a turbaned Kurd against the sky. One such I saw, guiding the plough; against the background of cloud, his whiplash showed black. I heard him curse his ox for a sluggard.

Again and again, I could have fancied myself in the uplands of Eastern Equatorial Africa. But the birds are different. One of them, a huge bird of prey with white tectrices, could not be identified by any of our party.

The steeper and wilder of the two mountains is Taurus, snow-capped. The valley we are ascending

narrows to a ravine, the ravine to a gorge, the gorge to a mere cleft between precipitous rocks, which leave a bare thirty paces for the rushing torrent and the narrow road. This is the Cilician Gate, through which every commander has had to pass when leading his army to the Holy Land.

Another sound besides that of the rushing waters rises out of the raging stream, and echoes from the rocky walls. In fancy, I hear the names of Xerxes and Darius, of Haroun-al-Raschid and Godfrey of Bouillon; but when the name of Alexander comes, it seems to me as if it were twice repeated by the rocky wall. I look closer, and read a Roman inscription.

The rocks form a natural gateway, and where they have been fortified by towers and bulwarks, walls and trenches, we see the work of Ibrahim Pasha, the only modern general to march northward instead of southward through the pass.

Here in Taurus one sees sights that recall Bible pictures. We pass a man on horseback; behind him sits astride, her hands on his shoulders, a veiled woman wearing Turkish trousers; in their company is a she-ass laden with a sack; and a foal runs alongside. Towards evening we pass camels resting by the roadside, their burdens looking like huge millstones.

Our long caravan has entered the plain and turned westward. We are approaching the City of the Kings.

Tarsus is a point of intersection, a place where races mingle and the paths of heroes cross. In the town, we meet Arabs and Turks in almost equal numbers, but

the appearance of the little bazaar is predominantly Arabian. The surrounding countryside is damp and fertile. At one time, the city was on the seashore. Now it is ten miles or more from the sea, and the plain grows a rich crop of cotton. In the intervening ages, for thousands of years, this land was a chain of lagoons, and Tarsus was like Venice, a town amid the waters. Across these lagoons came Cleopatra, in a golden galley with a purple sail, and Antony, at whose wish she had come, stood waiting for her on the shore. Even as the guide, who tells us this, points seaward, the carriage halts before a house built in the Arabian style. We enter a courtyard in the middle of which is a fountain, known as the Spring of the Apostle Paul, for, according to local tradition, this was the birthplace of the apostle to the Gentiles. It was but a little while after the days of Cleopatra. His father may well have been one of the lads who watched the queen of Egypt disembark from the golden galley with the purple sail.

At the edge of the town, among orange groves and fig orchards, a titanic wall rises out of the green. Passing through a doorway, we enter a green quadrangle, enclosed by four huge walls. Here is the tomb of Sardanapalus, the founder of the city. It was here that, after collecting all his wives and his treasure, he built the funeral pyre on which he went to his death.

Leaving this lugubrious spot, we drive across the open plain, become aware of the sound of running water, and halt beside a broad and swiftly flowing stream. This is the Calycadnus, known in classical

times as the Cydnus. It is famous in story for its connexion with the death of two monarchs. Just as, thanks to the secular changes in the disposition of land and sea, this river has twice changed its course, so has it twice changed the course of universal history. In the rapids on which we now look down, Alexander, overheated and overtired, bathed in search of refreshment, and caught the chill from which he died a few days later. Higher in its flow, close to the slopes of Taurus, which are now glowing in the rays of the setting sun, was drowned, with his charger, the German emperor Barbarossa.

Like broken columns, these five names, Sardanapalus, Alexander, Cleopatra, Paul, Barbarossa, rise above the little area of land and water; and, over the columns, arches a dome that signifies the world. The Assyrian ruler, insatiable in his lust for power, storms hither from the East, and ends his wild career in the flames, as if seeking transfiguration. With godlike stride the young Macedonian marches from the West to the Indus and back again, to perish by this river before he has fulfilled his Hellenic dream. Lively, talented, and beautiful, the queen of Egypt lands here, having come to join the Roman in whose ruin she is to share. At this spot is born the man who originates a doctrine more spiritual than any known to the world before his day. The doctrine spreads, transforms itself into power, and, after the passage of a thousand years, hard by the same spot is drowned the German emperor who embodies both the doctrine and the power. The countries through which I am now journeying have ever

been the battleground of creeds and armies, centres of faith and fountains of might.

Looking across the boundless plain, I feel that thus must the two men whose deaths are associated with this stream have looked across the plain of expectation, forebodingly: Alexander and Barbarossa, both conquerors though not that alone — men inspired by a great idea, lusting for power and yet urged on by faith, pilgrims of the spirit as well as wielders of the sword.

A couple of stone-breakers working beside the road cease their work of a sudden. They turn towards Mecca, folding their arms across their breasts, prostrate themselves, and murmur the name of that third prophet who came after Plato and after Christ.

Above me and above them soars the white-plumed bird of prey. Slowly, in sweeping curves, he wings his way upward into the evening sky.

An Arabian Banquet

Our bag was a small one. The gazelles were out of range among the crags of Anti-Lebanon, suckling their young. The Persian deerhounds had come with us in vain, had for nothing run several leagues beside our horses, with their red tongues lolling out of their mouths. These Persian cousins of the Siberian borzoi and the English greyhound are bred in the villages of the Druses. Like greyhounds, they are long and lean, silent, melancholy, passionate.

Similar were the qualities of my hosts on this expedition. Emir Omar is one of the younger sons of Emir Abd-el-Kader, who died in Damascus more than forty

years ago. Omar has portraits of his father, whose appearance harmonises with the tragical career of the man who fought the French in Algeria for fifteen years, to pass the last three decades of his life in obscurity and exile. It is interesting to hear his sons and grandsons, his nephews and grand-nephews, talk of him, though they do this with reserve, and (since their medium of conversation with me is French) in a tongue they have not fully mastered.

When Abd-el-Kader was eighteen the Algerians chose him to succeed his father, in preference to his elder brothers. The father, Mahi-ed-Din, had come to Algeria from Morocco, where his ancestors had held sway for centuries. In 1847, Abd-el-Kader had no choice but to surrender to the French, with the fifteen fighting men who were left out of his armies. After being held captive for some years in France, he was released in 1852 by Napoleon III, on condition that he would never again trouble the peace of Algeria, and was allowed to go to Syria — being now a man in middle life. In this exile he, perhaps for the first time, found himself. The warrior became a sage. For the remainder of his days this titan of Morocco, this sometime ruler of a warlike people, this man sprung from a family of sherifs (descendants of the Prophet), devoted himself to the study of the Koran, and to the writing of works on theology and philosophy. A champion of the Christians in times of trouble, he was all the more fervent in the advocacy of his own faith.

In one of the Druse villages through which we passed, his great grandson showed me a little farmstead, and in

it a small chilly room to which the erstwhile sovereign was wont to retire during Ramadan, living on bread and water for a month, reading the Koran, meditating, silent. Another descendant, a grandson, told me how Abd-el-Kader once came to the door of a friend's house (this friend was, like himself, a scholar and a man of standing) and impetuously demanded admittance. "My master is asleep," said the servant. "Wake him, then!" came the answer and the servant retired to do the urgent bidding. Now, to the ears of the waiting visitor, came through the half-open door the words muttered by the master to the servant: "Tell him I want to go on sleeping for a time." Wrathfully Abd-el-Kader shouted: "Let your master know that before he is thoroughly awake a thousand Mohammedans will have slaughtered a thousand Christians!"

Just outside the town, we enter an apricot orchard surrounded by a tall hedge, and ride up to the modest country-house built for himself by Abd-el-Kader. I enter a cool room, large, and sparsely furnished, as is the custom in this part of the world. Round the walls, two or three divans are ranged; there are neither tables nor chairs. When something is needed to serve as a table for fruit and brandy, the servants bring chairs from the terrace. This distinguished vacancy is characteristic of reception-rooms among the Arabs, of the places set apart for ceremonious intercourse. Comfort and the graces of life are reserved for the women's apartments, whither no male guests may follow the master of the house. In this matter, the rule of earlier centuries is still rigorously observed.

Suddenly the buzz of conversation is stilled; the nephews, cousins, and grandsons, who are making a clatter with their fowling-pieces, calling to their dogs, and emptying out the contents of their game-bags, stand, as it were, to attention. Mouhiddin Pasha, the head of the family, has entered the room, a frail old man, far on in the seventies. He is dressed with sedulous care, and the formality of the handclasp with which he bids me welcome, together with the meticulousness with which he chooses his words, shows a determination to keep up the dignity proper to the chief of a house which claims descent from the founder of the faith of Islam. Never before have I seen such deference paid to any one. All, even the grey-headed among his relatives, kiss his hand and raise it to their foreheads.

The table is laid for dinner in a wooden summer-house; it is decked with flowers and ribbons. I sit between the reverend senior (who in old age has taken to writing verse), and one of his grandsons whose chief interest is politics. Opposite me is Abd-el-Kader's younger son, politician and sportsman; and beside him a nephew, a country gentleman. At the end of the table sits the youngest of the emirs, a lad of thirteen, princely in bearing. This youth has a good knowledge of French, and tells me he finds it more amusing to live at home than to go to school at Beirut. Noticing my surprise that, except for myself and another guest, no one is drinking wine, the boy says to me in a low tone: "The pasha never drinks wine, and we have to wait till he is gone." When I rise to return thanks for the hospitality which has been shown me, all the emirs

DAMASCUS

stand up. The old man answers me in Arabic, but his words (when interpreted to me) show that he has understood my little speech in French.

When the venerable host had taken his departure, the men of the younger generation drew a breath of relief. "At length we can have a glass of champagne with you, now that the pasha has gone!"

"Allah is Allah!" thought I, and clinked glasses.

A Dream of Damascus

Scheherazade, noticing that day had dawned, broke off her tale. On the following night, she resumed, saying:

"You know, Sire, that one evening I went for a drive outside the city gates, had the carriage stayed at the foot of Mount Salehiyeh, got out and climbed the hill, attended by my eunuchs and by the old woman Fatimah, my servant. Entering the round temple which lies open to all the winds, I gazed forth over the hills and the dales which are hidden from us by this mountain. But as we turned westward, towards Mount Hermon, and saw the snow reddening in the last rays of the setting sun, Fatimah caught sight of a young man seated on a block of stone in front of the temple and looking fixedly towards the south, towards the town. Since he stared in this way at Damascus, from which he must so recently have come, I felt sure he was a stranger from foreign parts; and, indeed, his attire showed him to be a man of the West.

"He started on hearing our voices, and made as if to depart, afraid to intrude upon the privacy of veiled

women. I sent one of the eunuchs to ask him if he were a friend, and then, going up to him, I myself addressed him thus:

"'Greetings to you, if you are not our enemy! The disorder of the time emboldens me to speak to you, breaking our own customs that I may respect yours. You are from the West?'

"He nodded, replying: 'I am a German.'

"'You, stranger from the West, who have travelled so far to see the East, and have been visiting our own ancient city, tell me what you have found there to please you. Do you like Damascus?'

"The young man turned away, and looked down into the plain. He was silent for a space. Then, suddenly grasping one of my hands in his own left hand, and waving his right towards the distant prospect, he began to speak with considerable fervour:

"'Do you see the nearer chain of hills? Now they have a reddish sheen, like that of opals; in the broad light of day they had a yellow hue. Something glistens there, where a ravine shows, between the higher peaks. That is the Barada, which the Greeks used to call the Golden River. Many hours before I entered the city of Damascus, when I was still in the wilds of Anti-Lebanon, I saw the soul of the town, for the river is its soul, the river which created the oasis in the desert. Have you seen the place, a long way from here, where the young river has loaded its narrow valley with riches? How it rolls along between the rocky walls of that valley, its green banks lined with poplars, lilacs, and walnut-trees? Then, abruptly, it flows out from among the

rocks, there where you see that the last rays of the sun are concentrated in a declining glow, and enters the desert, which extends far and wide. Amid the waste, however, resolved on victory, it divides itself into seven shining arms, fashioning the garden of Damascus, in which, as we see well from here, the domes and minarets of the city gleam so brightly. The singers of Araby love to dilate on the glories of Damascus, and there is warrant for all that they say of this gem of a town, which is in very truth like a white amethyst framed in chrysoprase green.

"'I rode out through Bab Touma, along one of the raised poplar avenues that separate the green cornfields. The opium poppies were lifting their red and thirsty lips in myriads towards the sky. But when I saw the wild roses growing luxuriantly, in bushes, in globes, and in cataracts; when the dry tufts of the acacia blooms assailed me with their heavy perfume; when I made my way among the ancient nut-trees growing on the banks of new and ever new branches of the river — then, of a sudden, I fancied myself back in Germany!'

"He loosed my hand, and was silent. Watching him as he stood at the very edge of the declivity, and looked down lovingly at the nut groves which were now beginning to merge into the gathering darkness, I said gently: 'You love your own land! What can we offer you to compare with it?'

"'Araby!' he exclaimed, in answer. 'Is not Damascus there, among the nut groves? In Damascus are heaped up all the treasures of Araby. No town of the western world, no market, no museum, no royal store-

house, contains such beauties as are assembled within the white walls of this city of gardens. The morning light, when it streams through the hatchways in the arches that cover the bazaar, falls upon woven stuffs on which, in the Arabic script, the name of Allah is extolled. We see there colours which the western world has been vainly endeavouring to imitate ever since the days of the crusades; and gaily tinted silken stuffs into which silver threads have been woven. Dark-skinned hands bring hither iridescent glasses from Phoenician tombs, the phantasmagoria of the rainbow having been thus resurrected. The vendor of fruit-juice clashes his metal goblets together; donkey-drivers are chaffering; one of the beasts is burdened with oranges, and a negro stretches out a black hand for some of the fruit, grumbling the while at the price. Carts are forcing a way through the press. I notice a woman seated on a donkey, which carries also her two children and a white lamb. Three sheiks clad in black and gold, veritable kings of the East, are seated in front of one of the booths. In silhouette beneath a tilt roof are camels, grave of mien, laden with root-crops, and their owner is loudly crying the wares he has brought to market.

" 'The mouths of unexpected alleys gape here and there; shadowy corners give peeps of unexplored depths; narrow doorways between the stalls lead into bath-houses, and I catch a glimpse of men stretched on couches, being pummelled in accordance with a time-honoured method. In the interludes between business dealings, the pious, stripping the shoes from off their feet, enter the mosque, and are lost to sight. Yon

gleam upon the wall comes from old weapons hanging there. That sweet odour is from perfumes hidden away behind cupboard doors. In the shade of five Roman columns which take me by surprise in this oriental medley, squats a young Arab who spends the livelong day inlaying wooden shoes with pieces of shell which, resplendent on the foot of a veiled woman, might lure the fancies of the most sour-minded elder.

"'Amid wonders innumerable, are conduits of running water. Anywhere, everywhere in the town, man and beast have access to this bountiful water, which has called forth nut groves, corn-fields, poppy plantations, and rose hedges, from the desert, has assembled all the treasures of Araby into this oasis, thus creating Damascus!'

"By now the moon, which was in the first quarter, was shining brightly. Fatimah grew uneasy, and gave me a hint that it was time to return.

"'Are you armed, German enthusiast?' I enquired. 'Soon, when the moon sets, it will be quite dark.'

"He laughed, and plunged his hands into the side pockets of his coat.

"'Two!' he answered, 'for there is war in the world. This little black fellow, with six chambers and a death in each, came with me from Germany. The other is a gift from your town, from Araby.' He showed me a small dagger, chased with gold. The moonlight fell on the hilt, which was a single piece of rose-quartz, such as is found only in Mecca. The pink crystal had a lovely aspect in the silvern light, and the weapon seemed to

me one worthy even for you to wear in your girdle, O Commander of the Faithful!

"Walking back with me to my carriage, the German halted for a moment, and, leaning against the wall of the cemetery, said in low tones:

" 'You hear the murmur of the city. Night has fallen over Damascus. From the great mosque, the faithful have returned home through the acacia-scented streets. The stuffs and the rings, the silks and the swords and the inlays, have been stowed away in drawers and cupboards, to await the coming of a new day. Barred doors shut us out from the bazaar. On the roofs in the moonlight watchmen keep guard. The clashing of metallic vessels, the cries of the vendors, the chaffering of the market, have been stilled. Yet still you hear the murmur of the town. The streams have continued to flow unrestingly throughout the day, but their voice has been drowned. Now they are masters, are rulers of the night. The water which made the town, breathes its message to those of its inhabitants who still walk the streets. At this hour, too, awakens the spirit of the dead man who slumbers in its innermost recesses. The spirit of John the Baptist stirs in the great draped coffin which is housed in the Omaiyade mosque, and comes forth from behind the grating of the mortuary chapel. Is the place really open to none, whether Christian or Moslem?'

" 'The tale is but a legend,' I replied. 'Many learned men of your country and mine have proved that John does not sleep in the coffin of which you speak. Do you think that these sages err?'

" 'I am sure of it,' exclaimed the stranger, 'for I have an inner feeling which tells me why John came to Damascus.'

" 'We likewise revere him,' said I. 'He is one of Allah's prophets, like Mohammed.'

"I got into the carriage. The stranger came close up to me, and asked:

" 'Was Mohammed ever in Damascus?'

" 'No,' I rejoined hesitatingly. 'He came, attended by some of his followers, to Mount Salehiyeh, the hill on which we now stand. Thence for the first time he saw the city, as we saw it just now, in the light of the setting sun. After contemplating it awhile, he turned resolutely away, saying: "Come, my friends, let us go. I will not enter Damascus. Were I to do so, I should no longer be urged forward by a longing to find Paradise." '

"After I had recounted these words of the Prophet (blessed be his memory), the German left me, and vanished behind the wall of the cemetery. But I determined, O Commander of the Faithful, that one night I would tell you the story."

"Story?" questioned the Caliph, looking somewhat out of humour. "That is not a story! It is merely a description of our town, and a very incomplete one to boot."

"But the man who described it was a German!"

"And I have to listen to it because we have been allies," said the Caliph with a laugh.

Scheherazade, noticing that day had dawned, broke off her recital with the customary phrase.

FROM PALESTINE

Practical Idealism — Jewish Pioneers

FROM PALESTINE

Practical Idealism

Those who are journeying from Tiberias and Nazareth westward towards the sea, look from the upland into a broad, sinuous, and lonely valley. Here and there, only, is my glance arrested by the sight of a red-tiled roof, of the regular lines of cultivated land. The names of these places where human hands are at work elude my memory, except for that of one village (or is it already a town?), new and clean, Balfouria.

The distinguished Englishman's visit to Palestine was, perhaps, the most notable incident in his distinguished career. With mingled humility and pride, Lord Balfour set foot in the land he had wrestled for on behalf of the ancient race to which he did not himself belong. As minister for foreign affairs he had been moved by the English trend towards practical idealism to promise that if, as the outcome of the war, the Entente should win back Palestine, England would restore to the Jews a homeland of which they had been dispossessed two thousand years ago. A letter to Rothschild was all that bound the world empire to this undertaking, but three or four years later the Zionists duly received their charter.

'Tis an idle question whether this decision was the outcome of shrewd calculation or of splendid altruism, whether it was dictated by interest or by sympathy; in truth it was determined both by policy and by idealistic

promptings, and (like all wise statesmanship) was advantageous to both parties concerned in the affair. The promise to the Zionists made it easier for England, during the negotiations in Paris, to secure her mandate in Palestine despite the opposition of France; and it helped to convince President Wilson that there was a moral purpose underlying the British determination to stand sentry on both banks of the Suez Canal. At the same time, Britain was able to ensure the cordiality of the Hebrew financiers, whereas Germany, using Jewish capital for her own purposes, had alienated the Jewish capitalists by treating them with contempt. To-day Balfour has become a guardian angel, and those personally acquainted with the veteran peer are convinced that he takes his mission seriously.

Indeed, when I ask myself what I found most striking in this new Palestine, I have to realise that it was not the mere novelty which is a commonplace in every young colony. What impressed me was the undertone of strong emotion. The feeling is deep, not loud; for in Palestine certain faults conspicuous among European Jews have ceased to be noticeable. Never before have I seen members of the Jewish race so tranquil, so unexacting, so little garrulous. Since Herzl's day, the "Jewish State" has invariably been caricatured as a debating society in perpetual session. It would, said the critics, be conducted by a crowd of hair-splitting Talmudists who would speedily steer their ship to a wreck both ludicrous and lamentable. But what I see here on all hands is work — work inspired by the deep feeling of which I have already spoken.

Not a religious feeling! The unprejudiced traveller is amazed to note how little there is of either ardent religious faith or a sense of religious community among a people the very basis of whose association is that they are all persons of the same creed. In 1926, there were at least 150,000 recent settlers in Palestine, Zionists of the last thirty years, without counting the earlier immigrants. As far as I could see, they had little more interest in the faith of their fathers than have the majority of German Jews. Most of them attend the synagogue once or twice a year only; few of them go there every Sabbath; very few, indeed, are pietists.

What, then, holds them together?

A sense of nationality. A "good European" who visits this land of the Jews is horrified, at first, to find there a revival of all the nationalisms which it is one of the good European's chief tasks to combat. Discouraged, the visitor wonders whether Palestine is to witness a mere repetition of everything that has imperilled Europe for a century and made it uninhabitable for a decade. Is there to be in Palestine a new manifestation of that insufferable ambition, that narrow and foolish pride, which makes every nation aspire to be the strongest, the most prolific; to be regarded as the best and the ablest; to become the "leading nation"? If so, he may as well turn his back on Palestine!

But in Palestine, I contend, he will find the special case. Those who, persecuted everywhere else, come together there to find a place of refuge, those who are driven thither by outward stresses or inner urges, come

to Palestine, to the land where their forefathers dwelt long ago, inspired with the conviction that now at length they will be able to lift up their heads, will no longer belong to a race of inferiors, will be masters in their own household. Such is their basic feeling, and nowhere among them did I find it marred by the illusion that they were the Chosen People.

In all humility, these pioneers want to till the land which to them is holy, and the young Zionists are already cultivating thrice as much ground as the Christian colonists of old standing have been able to occupy effectively. They are humble and thankful. If they have an ambition, it is to show the world their mettle. Their motives are exclusively productive.

Pioneers, I have called them, and there is no exaggeration in the use of this term. They are pioneers just as much as if they were settlers in California or in Africa. For the land is stubborn! Stony desert is the country round Jerusalem, though it is beginning to respond to the labour of their diligent hands. Even the Emek Valley, where villages are springing up everywhere, is by no means a promising area for settlement, and to start farming in such a place implies a talent for renunciation. The coastal regions of Palestine are comparatively fertile, but are not extensive enough to absorb and feed more than a fraction of the immigrants.

None the less these Jewish settlers, who (it had been declared) would never take kindly to any occupation other than the time-honoured Hebrew pursuit of commerce, and would obviously fail to make a livelihood when reduced to trading with one another, these people,

supposed to be loath to undertake manual work, and of whom an opponent said that every one of them would want to be a parliamentary deputy and if possible to become president, have actually retransformed themselves into agriculturists, are once more herdsmen and ploughmen as they were in the days when Moses brought them the Tables of the Law.

Such a change has only been rendered possible by giving them a country which they can regard as their own. Were it not for this, not one of them would handle a spade. Were it not for this, they would one and all of them peddle old clothes in preference to walking behind a plough. Some of them were peasants in Russia before coming to Palestine, but these are in the minority. Most of them were intellectuals of one sort or another, writers and dealers and talkers, to whom the handling of axe or shovel was at first a difficult task. As a sign that they are a united people, they insist upon a common language; what comes first in the new Palestine is not the common faith, but the common tongue.

That is what welds together this ancient people, renewed.

Jewish Pioneers

The car halts in the muddy street. We get out and squelch through the mire for a quarter of an hour. From a distance we can see nothing beyond a few wooden houses, amid which a water-tower rises. Nearby is a primitive farmstead, but there is no dwelling-house, not even a cottage; only a few sheds, poor-looking places, rough and inconvenient. In some of them,

cows are standing, and a girl in a short skirt is bringing a milkpail. There are fowls, too; a workshop where men are at work with saws, hammers, and glue-pots; a room in which rough linen garments, shoes, hats, and so on, are piled; a shed to live in, the common room for eating and resting, as bald and bare as in an overdrawn description of such a place in a workhouse; the utensils are of earthenware and of tin, as are those in the open kitchen near at hand. Some more sheds divided up into little cubicles, each of which holds two beds. A picture hangs here and there, a map, a print after Rembrandt; for the rest, so plain and unadorned that the place strikes chill.

Yet it is among these most modern of Jews that I have found more unmistakably than anywhere else a resurrection of the early Christian spirit, have found an ideal communism. These lads and lasses are extraordinarily diversified. Here is a lively girl from Mecklenburg, and here is a demure little maiden from Odessa; here is a fanatical fellow from Crimea, who looks at a visitor morosely, while the man next to him is a cheery emigrant from Stuttgart, a song ever on his lips. There are perhaps forty settlers at this one spot, and each of them is of a different type from the others. One thing unites them all: getting away from Europe; removal from towns; return from the dispersion. There seems something almost unnatural about it. Look at Ruth, the pretty milkmaid. A year ago she was dancing at the carnival in Cologne. Why do we find her now among kine and ploughs, having sacrificed all her whilom pleasures?

WALL OF LAMENTATION IN JERUSALEM

Because there is no sacrifice! Because she takes a sublime delight in this new beginning. Because, when difficulties and troubles arise, she is invigorated by a warrior's joy in mastering them for the sake of her task of upbuilding. Very few of the immigrants have forsaken that task, and returned to the old world. A community making no claim to bring about the redemption of mankind has come into being in the most natural way. Immigrants arrive in groups, for the most part, and are allotted some of the land which the central Zionist authority is continually buying. (Six per cent. of the land in Palestine is now Zionist, but scarcely half of this amount is cultivable.) They receive also a trifle of money, some necessary implements, and a little farming stock. The scheme in accordance with which these things are done has been drafted by a council of botanists, agriculturists, and economists. Now the immigrants set to work upon land which has been untilled for thousands of years, since the more fruitful regions of Palestine are in the hands of the Arabs; and they build wooden shanties as best they may. If they have a carpenter or other skilled artisans among them, so much the better; in default of this, each one of them must learn, like peasants in general, to be handy at whatever job may turn up. There is no ruler, no one to issue orders. They meet in council evening after evening to decide on the next day's work; on the Sabbath, they plan for a week ahead. After a year, they may want a little more money from headquarters. When two or three years have elapsed, they have become independent. Now they eat bread made from their

own wheat, carry milk to the nearest market, sell and buy.

Only in this virgin countryside, only in these pristine beginnings of a new community, is it possible to lead such a life; a life in which no one has individual possessions, and no one entertains extravagant expectations — since none of them pose as world reformers. Their only wish is for a tranquil existence, one in which they are not subject to contumely. Couples come together, under the form of marriage, but their wedding is rarely solemnised by a rabbi. If girls in search of amorous adventures come hither, they are speedily cured, either of their taste for Bohemia, or of their taste for Palestine. Here bodily toil is so arduous that the eroticism of towns takes wings, and love is simplified, being primarily directed towards the procreation of children. The contentiousness characteristic of urban life, in which class distinctions are so much in evidence, has vanished. No doubt it would be untrue to say that all love one another. They are human beings; cliques are formed; and, living at close quarters as they do, enmities must sometimes arise. But seldom does any member quit the group; serious disputes are rare.

Discussion is rife among the champions of the various economic types of society. The younger generation is, for the most part, in favour of communal ownership, whereas their elders prefer a system of private ownership in which certain institutions are socialised. In the towns, opinion is on the side of capitalism and privately controlled industry. Concerning these matters, controversy has raged, but to a greater extent at congresses

in Europe than at home in Palestine. At some of the Palestinian colonies I found that after six or ten years' experience sometime communists were still running their undertakings cooperatively to a considerable extent. There was a "People's House," on a small scale, with cooperatively conducted agriculture, but separate farms and separate profits. There would be a "Children's House" for communal education; public discussion; a public library; a public hospital. On the other hand, near Tiberias I came across a Jew who was living close to a cooperative colony, but conducted his homestead and farm entirely on his own, and employed Arabs in preference to Jews because Arabs were cheaper. In Tel-Aviv, the most motley and the ugliest of the Zionist centres, one feels one might almost as well be walking along Kurfürstendamm. Within a decade, the population has grown to more than 30,000. The young people hate the place.

In Jerusalem there is an ingenious town-planner who designs the coming towns and villages. In his creative imagination, he sees the pleasure-gardens which as yet have scarcely been staked out, and upon the void steppe he conjures up the projected public baths, the town hall, and so on. Listening to him, looking at his plans, I, too, can realise in fancy these things which do not yet exist in the world of fact, and can picture Palestine as it will be twenty years hence.

The common sense of the leaders, which has long since curbed their enthusiasm, suffices to ensure success. Opposition is weakening. The struggles with the Arabs are less in evidence, and will be over and done with

to-morrow. The English perceive the intelligence of their pupils, and do not want that intelligence to be used in order to promote competition with themselves. The Jews, on the other hand, have no desire for the political power which England cultivates in this part of the world.

What "the Baron's" great colonies, what Rothschild's millions could not achieve in a generation, England has made possible for the Jews by her policy. The immigrants under the new dispensation are not persons who depend upon large-scale private capital in Old Europe; they must be prepared to work in Palestine, and to work hard, that they may make their own livelihood. Tens of thousands of them have been poor, unhappy folk, half-enslaved; thousands of them (the German Jews in especial) have given up good positions and left comfortable homes in order to settle in Palestine. The wonder of the new Palestine is not the factories — the sugar-mills, the glassworks, and the silk-weaving establishments — in Jaffa and Haifa. These have been simply brought here from Vienna, Prague, or Posen; and it is only because they will pay better in Palestine that they have not been transferred by preference to Cairo or Calcutta. As for the fruit groves along the coast, from which the bulk of the export of Jaffa oranges is now derived, their success is of interest to the accountant rather than to the ethnographer or the psychologist.

But what is going on all over the countryside, the quiet and persistent transformation of the ancient earth, is a finer spectacle to-day than it can possibly be ten years hence. To-day's is the work of pioneers.

GREECE

Rejuvenated Athens — Statues and Masks — A Woman of Modern Greece — The Gulf of Patras — Olympia — Arcadia

GREECE

Rejuvenated Athens

Morning had come. Refreshed by gentle sleep, a town had awakened to new life. Can it be true that Greece is in the Balkans? Was it in this same corner of the earth that, almost a year ago, I was laboriously seeking an issue, was endeavouring to discover what settlement could be possible for such national confusions? Even though the Greeks are indeed a Balkan people, with all that this implies, their capital city is utterly unlike jejune Sofia, sophisticated but savage Bukharest, medieval and sulky Belgrade, poor little Nish, or the thrice renamed immensity that lies beside the Bosphorus.

I love Athens. During months in Stamboul I had vainly sought the unity which by rights should appertain to a city, the fundamentals of a civic life, the personal entity proper to a metropolis. I found it here in a single morning, and morning after morning it has come to me as a fresh boon.

Yet what could be a harder task for a man, for a city, than to inherit a great and ancient name which imposes extraordinary obligations on sons and heirs? Do not weeks and months elapse before the visitor to Rome can toilsomely re-create in his mind the Rome he has known from the first, having dwelt there from youth upwards, picturing the place in fancy? There stratum

has been superimposed upon stratum, five times in succession, and to distinguish them one from another needs labour, imagination, and learning, just as all these are required to disinter and identify the strata at Troy or at Mycenae. Only places whose significance and image are wholly determined by nature and history, seem to the traveller fully accordant with the spirit of their tradition; and it is thus that Bruges and Bamberg, Venice and Damascus, confirm, in the material world, impressions that for him have long existed in the inner world of the ideal.

But Athens, more than all, embodies everything to which the mind has so long and so eagerly looked forward. It does in very truth fulfil expectation, being splendid, restful, and serene.

It is from a carriage that I get my first general view of the town. We move quietly and slowly, only the horse's hoofs being audible, for the roads are asphalted — an unusual luxury in the East. The streets are wide, and run between white houses more notable for breadth than height. Columns succeed columns interminably; for the doorways, the entrance gates, and the like, are all sustained by columns, which are of white marble to-day, as of old. To mitigate the severity of these columns, they are fronted by lines of mimosas and pepper-trees; and in the squares and the front gardens orange-trees are planted for decorative effect. The orange is even more in evidence here than in Sicily, and assuredly it deserves the name of tree of life, for it bears golden fruit (now reddening in the sun) side by side with white blossoms.

Amid plantations of ardent phoenix palms, gently waving mimosas, and orange-trees of cool and lovely foliage, rise marble palaces, repositories of the wonders of science and the treasures of art, to which access is gained by open stairways lined with white statues. Nowhere in the world is the legacy of the ages more nobly housed than here — and yet Athens is not a mere mausoleum.

A new city has grown up around the relics of the old, a city that stretches far and wide, and is full of a many-faceted life. The place is wholly Greek; nothing in it recalls the four centuries of Turkish dominion whose passing is of comparatively recent date. One who gains a first sight of it from the Hill of the Temples is especially impressed by the whiteness of the city on which he looks down. He notes the absence of three things which are apt to abound in the busy haunts of modern man: Athens has no pinnacles, no factory chimneys, and scarcely a tower. Those who built the new city were sedulous to avoid anything that would interfere with the beauty of line that was perfected thousands of years ago. The town has no pointed arches, and very few round ones. The old gods were dead, and most of their temples had fallen; but the new town could be made splendid with the statues and the vases, with the gold and the coins and the bronzes, which had been dug out of the rubbish-heaps; there could be new universities and academies, worthy successors of the one that was established among the olive-trees of Colonus when Athens flourished of old.

Now Athens blooms anew. Now, as of old, the sun

and the kindly airs of heaven cherish this precious vessel; now, as of old, they call forth fresh shoots in the ancient gardens of Attica. In February, boys, carrying sprays of pink almond blossom, stand at the street corners and offer huge baskets of narcissus for sale. There is a profusion of hyacinths and anemones; and a still more lavish profusion of violets — not the small northern violet, which may well be called modest, but the passionate violet of the south, whose great flower seems too heavy a crown for its long stalk.

To and fro along the wide streets, in the balmy air which blows from the adjoining seas, the Athenians walk swiftly, gesticulating and talking; they sit beneath the orange-trees, talking; they stand in groups in the squares, talking; talking politics in the intervals between pleasantries and business transactions. All is much the same to-day as it was in the days of Aristophanes. The critical and democratic spirit of the Agora would seem to have withstood the temptations of the barbarians, and to have been preserved in this speech of the Greeks. Seeing as much, one can even forgive them the way in which they have distorted it, the language which, according to their contention, they alone can pronounce correctly, whereas German humanists cling to the dogma of Erasmus.

Driving in carriages, they shout witticisms to one another across the road. The elegantly dressed ladies of Athens trip along in their dainty footgear, making no attempt to resemble the caryatides of the Erechtheum — though now and again, from beneath a smart Persian hat there peeps (conflicting with its style) a Grecian

nose or a chin moulded like that of an Alexander. Many of these modern Greek women, too, have large eyes set wide apart, reminding us of those we see in the faces painted on black-figured vases. Near the arch of Hadrian, on the grass-grown site of the temple of Zeus, children play in the sunshine, looking from a distance like tiny insects beside the enormous Corinthian ruin. We see their bare legs twinkling as they run, for the children, at least, have retained the classical fashion of leaving the limbs free to the air.

On these genial days of spring, the Athenians of riper years are walking up and down under the shade of evergreen oaks in front of a stately marble building, which the city owes to the munificence of two wealthy brothers. From the upper terrace they look beyond the violet shadow of Hymettus, look down across the plain beset with sober grey olive-trees and point to the sea, which always will remain the true home of the Hellenes.

It is not until I climb to the Acropolis that I get an extensive view over the sea. South-westward lies the Bay of Phaleron, bordered by gently swelling dunes, rising in one place into the high rocks of Castella. On the farther side of the bay is the blue silhouette of Salamis, behind which lie the snow-crowned hills of Peloponnesus. Southward lies the island of Aegina; westward, the town of Corinth. Northward are the higher mountains and the deeper valleys of Attica, spotless, beautifully shaped.

All this is Athens. This and much more do we see before we venture to breathe the name of Athena Parthenos or that of Athena Nike. Severed alike from

the new town and the old, the temples rest on the hill whose top was levelled for building by the Pelasgians thousands of years before Pericles. The house of the gods stands untroubled on this lofty site. Nothing towers above it.

Nothing towers in Athens. Everything spreads there in tranquil freedom, as things do, and men who live in the light, conscious of their own value.

Statues and Masks

Now, at night, Athens is sound asleep. When, after midnight, a carriage drives through the broad streets, a lonely vehicle, the horses' hoofs wake echoes from the closed portals resting peacefully behind the rows of columns. Recently, however, Athens was singing all night long, when for a whole week the city was keeping carnival.

From morning till night, processions of masqueraders filled the streets, growing more numerous and singing more heartily as the day went on. By nightfall, people in ordinary attire had practically vanished from the scene, and masks held universal sway.

Nowhere have I seen carnival celebrated with so much gay innocence as here. One might have fancied oneself watching children at play, instead of an industrious population forgetting its work for a few evenings. Industrious they certainly are, not working very hard, but working enough, and thus differing from the Neapolitans, with whom they are often thoughtlessly compared. The Athenians and the Neapolitans have nothing in common, not even their charm. Were I in

search of a catchword to convey the tone of these carnival days and nights in Athens, I should make free with the name of Aristophanes, and not be far from the truth. See Harlequin, making the most of his temporary vantage-ground, a crazy wooden stage set upon a cart hung with jangling bells; a few paces away are the ruins of the Theatre of Dionysus, where, during these festal nights, the ghost of Athenian comedy walks. The salt of Attic humour stings as of yore, and the city makes fun of its own foibles with the same zest as two thousand years ago. Nor do foreigners escape. On one such Thespian cart I saw a man dressed as a negro being taught by a stage soldier how to use a rifle, and the dialogue was full of pointed allusions to England's coloured colonial warriors.

The streets are thronged. The play of colour grows richer, the jests broaden, the music becomes livelier. With few exceptions, both men and women appear as masked pierrots, for there is little variety of costume except in the matter of colour. But of colour there is a riot!

Next morning the streets are deserted. All the world is sleeping off its fatigue; the shops are closed. But these cheerful Athenians see no reason for mourning in sackcloth and ashes because it is Ash Wednesday (or, rather, Ash Monday, the corresponding festival hereabouts). By noon the girls — a trifle subdued, somewhat more resplendent, and perhaps rather tired — are dancing in the open atrium of the Zappeion. The energies that were finding vent yesterday in a Bacchanal, are to-day being given a more decorous choreo-

graphic expression, in the form of folk-dances, every tribe, every province, and every island being represented in appropriate costume.

These dances were charming, so long as they remained Albanian (if I may be allowed to use that word as a comprehensive designation for the numerous subvarieties of this people of the southern Balkans). Not until there appeared on the scene a group of dancers from Hellas, posturing in chitons to the accompaniment of ancient Dorian airs, and wearing modern high-heeled shoes, did a strategic retreat seem desirable.

I had merely to turn round, and take one or two steps, to find myself in the shadows of Greek columns, shadows oblique, short, and strong, cast by the noontide sun.

There are hours when, contemplating the relics from the classical days of Attica, thinking of this restless people whose main purpose in life would seem to have been almost incessant war, one cannot but ask oneself what remains as fruit of their activities beyond the vestiges of purposeless beauty, the verses of the poets, the creations of Plato's intellectual world.

For, strange though it may seem, in this city where statues of the gods abound, there is hardly one statue of a mortal who lived in ancient Greece. If you want to know what Pericles and Socrates, Alexander of Macedon, Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides, looked like, you must study the originals or the copies in Rome and London. Thus only after a detour can the mind return to the names of those who have become exemplars of valour, fortitude, and intelligence for all times and all nations.

AN ATTIC AMAZON

Among the monuments at the Dipylon, where Greek marble rises into the sunlight and the blue in commemoration of those who rest beneath in the darkness of the grave, a relief showing a youth on horseback striking down another warrior, attracts attention by the exquisite beauty of the workmanship. The inscription tells us that Dexileos, in whose memory the sculpture was made, won fame and death for himself at Corinth (in the year 394) by his heroic deeds. The relief also depicts his parents, who stand by the tomb, weeping, and calling a farewell: "Chaire Dexilee!" Neither general nor king was he, but a simple lancer.

Would any have heard of him, but for this monument; would any one remember the young Athenian soldier, little more than a boy, who gave his life for Athens? An artist has made him immortal, an artist who, endowing the name of Dexileos with imperishable glory, himself remains nameless.

Chaire Dexilee!

A Woman of Modern Greece

She was a girl of sixteen, who lived in a little house with a big garden, immersed in her daily occupations, all unaware of what life held in store for her. Her father's brother lived in far-off Moscow, being a priest who had risen to a high position in the Orthodox Church. Now came a letter from this uncle, telling of a German friend who was about to visit Greece, and wished to wed the maiden he had never seen. Her father, letter in hand, told her of this strange proposal.

"Why does he want to marry me?"

"Because you are a Greek!"

The German came. His looks were nothing to boast of; he was not of noble birth; and he was thirty years older than the girl he wished to make his wife. He said:

"I have a wife at home, and three children; but I am getting a divorce. I have business interests in Prussia and in Russia; but I am going to retire from active participation in these affairs. I want to marry a Greek woman, one familiar with the Homeric poems."

"I know them well," answered the maiden.

"Then take a spade and a shovel, as I am going to do. Come with me, and we will discover the camp of Agamemnon and the city of Priam."

So Heinrich Schliemann married her. They set forth on the quest, and disinterred the ruins of Mycenae and of Troy. In sunshine and in rain, the young woman of Greece stood shoulder to shoulder with the elderly German. From the clutches of the ancient earth they wrested the crown of Agamemnon; and they discovered the tombs of the heroes, tombs full of buried treasure. Though he had no professorial status and had never made an exhaustive study of archaeology, though he was nothing more than a man of business, he found what had for so long been vainly sought, being guided by imaginative insight and inspired by his veneration for Homer.

Such was the youth of Sophia Schliemann.

Then came the middle period in Athens. In that city he built himself a commodious mansion, where was housed as much of his treasure-trove as he kept for

himself; but most of it he gave away, dividing his gifts equally between the German government and the Greek. By this date he had become naturalised as a Greek. For thirty years he, who knew nearly a dozen languages, had refrained from learning Greek, being afraid lest this should distract him prematurely from money-making — an avocation he pursued, not as an end in itself, but as a prelude to what he regarded as his main purpose in life, and as indispensable to the fulfilment of his mission. Now he learned to speak and write his wife's native tongue, and with her aid he devoted himself to the description of all that he had exhumed from the soil of Hellas. It was she who superintended the excavations at one of the dome-tombs of Mycenae, and to her we owe one of the three most important books concerning Heinrich Schliemann's work. Her name stands beside his in the history of science.

She had two children, a son and a daughter; and to-day, when they have grown-up children of their own, it still comes natural to her to address them by their Homeric names of Agamemnon and Andromache.

Their house has been strangely transformed. True, the proud name "House of Ilium" is still inscribed over its portal, but her interests lie elsewhere. She smiles gently when she speaks of those early days, in the soft voice which was equally melodious in all the chief tongues of Europe. Looking into the cases in the museum, where lie the golden girdles, the daggers, the coins, the rings, and the masks of Homeric kings — all the treasures which, long since, she disinterred from among the crumbling bones — she catches sight of the

bull's head, the golden bull's head, which lay beside Clytemnestra's grave, and says:

"It took me a whole week to dig that out, clearing away the earth carefully with a little penknife, kneeling on the ground. When my mind goes back to these things now, I find it difficult to believe that it was I who did them. It seems to me that I must be recalling some one else's story, a story I have read in an old book."

Looking down on the golden bull's head as it lies in the glass case, she fancies that the glass is like a transparent wall cutting her off from her own past, that past which became hers by such a strange freak of destiny.

Schliemann died thirty years ago, and since then she has been living in another world than the dusty one of archaeological explorations.

She has devoted herself to healing and to planting. In youth, she thrust her tender fingers into earth which had been undisturbed for three thousand years, that she might bring back to light what the Olympian gods, when they crashed from heaven, resolved to hide from a sceptical generation. Now, at her instigation, younger hands are planting the seeds of new life in this ancient earth of Greece, and saplings of her own planting have already grown into shady trees. After many years of endeavour, Madam Schliemann succeeded in inaugurating a sanatorium outside the city. Hundreds of consumptives have been treated in this establishment, and many have gone away cured. Interested though she is in this work of human kindness, her chief joy in life is the growing of trees. Around the dozen or more charm-

ing pavilions which constitute the sanatorium, the trees push upward year by year, and year by year she makes fresh additions to the woodland growth.

As she stood there upon the terrace, three pale lasses ran up and nestled in the folds of her silken gown, their shy eyes beaming with gratitude towards their benefactress. The old lady's gaze travelled over the land and across the sea towards the mountains of Peloponnesus, which rose far away in the blue distance, with Mycenae in their midst. But it was not of this she thought; indeed, she saw nothing and thought of nothing save that which lay near and about her.

"Do you see those pines?" she asked. "How fast they grow! Ten years hence our convalescents will be able to walk in the shade of lofty trees."

The children glanced with dubious eyes from her to the pine groves. The hill of Agamemnon lifted its crest into the air, unheeded by her whose hand had brought the monarch's crown forth into the light of day.

The Gulf of Patras

As our boat travels over the waters, Athens and its hill which was once the stronghold of the gods disappear slowly from sight in this amazingly clear air. In the afternoon light, the city remains visible for a considerable time. When we look towards the east, we see the Parthenon lighted up by the westering sun, and the gold-brown columns of the temple become ever clearer as the day wanes. Now, at last, the voyager is able to understand why the statue of Athena Promachus is of such giant proportions. Mariners approaching from

Cape Sunium could catch the gleam of the goddess's spear as they rounded the point.

Every characteristic of this wonderful town has been so deeply graven into the memory, so fragrant with reminiscence is its every detail, that our present-day troubles vanish before these tokens of an age long past.

The month was February, but already the breath of spring was in my nostrils, and Attica was filled with the fragrance of violets. Athens and its shimmering stronghold of the gods vanished in a golden haze as we sailed through the canal which modern engineers (fulfilling an ancient dream) have cut through the narrow isthmus of Corinth. There lay the town of which the Hellenes were wont to speak with enthusiastic awe, much as our own forefathers used to speak of Paris. Where is now the temple of Aphrodite, and what has become of her lovely priestesses? Where are the fleets from Lydia and the islands? Where the cargoes of purple dyes and the jewels from Persia? A little town lies high and dry on the shore of the gulf; it is a jejune and provincial-looking agglomeration of houses. Let us hasten onward.

O Greece, you have still such gifts of the gods as your mountains, your olive groves, and your vines; the skies spread their pale-blue canopy over your violet hills, from whose features a kindly hand has smoothed away the wrinkles and the folds. No line remains to trouble the gentle harmony of hill and dale, the even sweep of bay and gulf; the rocky land strides forward into the sea; the trees are parklike in their luxuriant growth; and the vineyards stretch away mile upon mile

along the shadeless slopes. No change ever comes suddenly and harshly; abruptness is unknown; everything seems to have meekly surrendered to the peaceful influence of one dominating will.

At length we can understand how it came to pass that in this little corner of the world, in the shadow of these hills, and in the shimmering loveliness of this bay, a nation rose to glory and decayed, leaving behind it works of such consummate worth that the artists of all times stand in speechless admiration, spellbound by such magical beauty.

Yet all the glories of marble statues pale before the loveliness of the Bay of Corinth on an evening in spring. We drive along a road close to the margin of the sea, a narrow strip of flat land between hill and water, fruitful as a garden that has long been tended by a diligent hand. Every inch is cultivated. The dwarf vines bearing the famous grapes of Corinth, "currants" as we know them, push up through the red or the white earth, and peasants in blue woollen jackets delve leisurely with their spades to clear the irrigation channels. Ancient olive-trees spread their silvery branches over the bay, whose waters are so deep in hue that they seem as unreal as a dream-land sea. The meadows are dark-green, dotted over with olive-trees, and snow-white lambs skip and play in sun and shade among the sedate and elderly sheep with which they are herded. Still and quiet as a sculptured effigy, the young shepherd stands sentinel.

Silvery stars of Bethlehem and pale anemones enamel the grass at the lad's feet. Interspersed with the olive-trees are numerous fruit trees, white and rose and ivory

of colour like young damsels in summer frocks; and from beneath the thorny cactus bushes dark iris flowers appear. In the cool ravines, shaded by holm-oaks and myrtles, the ground is blue with violets. Their fragrance is wafted on the breeze to the bay, and across the sea to the islands which swim in the silky blue haze of eventide.

There are no villages, no white towns; stern and forsaken, the purple rocks march forward into the waves, reminding us of those grottoes where in the heroic days of yore the centaurs dwelt. Far away, beyond coast and bay and sea, the snowy cap of Parnassus lights its rosy fires in the rays of the setting sun. At the great mountain's feet, its white sail silhouetted against the ruddy rocks, a boat is making for the open sea. I follow its course as it glides along, losing it from time to time as it passes behind the black cypresses, catching sight of it again as it emerges, in very truth, an emblem of the spirit of this spring evening. Slowly we round the curve of the bay, and I feel that all these beauties are but visions in a dream, a dream of Greece dreamt long ago. . . .

In Patras the streets are agog with laughter and music, for it is carnival time. The masqueraders pass along with melancholy airs upon their lips. The balconies lie open to the breeze coming hitherward from the plain. The crowd throngs the great square and walks up and down beneath the spreading boughs of the orange-trees, which are decked with rainbow-tinted streamers and bedewed with confetti. The whole night long the sound of music issues from the dancing-halls,

the whine of bagpipes being in the ascendant, accompanying the dances of girls dressed Turkish fashion in voluminous trousers, who foot it gaily in the taverns bordering the harbour, haunts of sailors and long-shore loafers.

Next morning, when I left the town in the early dawn, the figures of pierrots still flitted past in the paling light of the setting moon, and still the air was filled with the melancholy drone of a Grecian melody.

Olympia

Twice has the river, now meandering so placidly through the valley, overflowed its banks and submerged the holy places, leaving the site covered with sand and clay. German brains and sinews have been devoted to the toilsome labour of freeing the columns and walls, the ways and passages of Olympia from their earthy palls, and revealing them to the light of day. The whole place now lies like a hidden dale among the wooded hills of the Alpheus, which forms a boundary to the south.

A path leads from the museum to the stream, which flows along in the deep bed the waters have carved for themselves throughout the ages. Almond-trees encircle the sun-bathed village; and the fields, flushed with the tender green of young corn, sweep down to the river's edge. Oxen draw the plough slowly, and the heavy-footed peasant guides the share as it cuts through the long moist furrows of this bountiful soil. A bridge leads to a road running along a deep hollow between pine-clad slopes and grey boulders; beyond the bridge, both

vale and river disappear, together with the village and its inhabitants. All the living and moving things of the present vanish as we cross this bridge, for the tiny span leads to a long-past age.

We are alone amid the stones of a spot which had been abandoned for a thousand years. Its splendours are no more; what remains of its sometime glory is hidden away in this secluded corner of the world on whose marge the herdsman feeds his goats and drives them home to the milking when the sun sets. Olympia is a city of the dead.

Forty years have come and gone since Curtius began his excavations. Nature's kindly hand has followed the hand of the man of science, and has planted shady pine-trees among the masonry of walls and columns, softening the jagged outlines with verdure, as in ancient churchyards the bare tombstones are softened by mosses, lichens, and bushes. Between the cracks and fissures of the temple pavement, which the excavator stripped of its covering of earth, the fresh greenery of ferns has reappeared. Grey boulders which once formed the altars are gay with blue iris and the white cups of daisies, while the stadium is ablaze with red anemones. Each plant flourishes with singular luxuriance, as though it felt that a noble soil contributed to its nourishment.

As is the case with all the ruins of ancient Greece, these stones, in their intangible purity and dignity, keep sentimental effusion at bay, hold all romanticism at arm's length, as though such feelings might savour of familiarity.

Olympia now consists mainly of foundations. A few columns still stand erect, a stretch of wall remains here and there, marble channels even now conduct water across the grounds. Pedestals have been set up again with loving care, and among them I see a great triangular one whose inscription shows that on it formerly stood the Nike of Paeonius. The pediment alone is eighteen feet in height, and from this elevation the winged Victory, her saffron robes borne backward in the speed of her flight, seems to come floating down from the blue sky. On a mound towards the centre rose the temple of Zeus, and the grey columns lie strewn around. Once upon a time they were overlaid with white marble, and were gilded and adorned with many colours. In the place of honour in that temple stood the statue of Zeus Cronion by Phidias, wrought of ivory and gold, and, as a mark of divine appreciation, the god vouchsafed a lightning flash, which destroyed it!

Of the temple of Hera, probably the oldest of extant Greek temples, nearly all the columns remain standing, and in their midst two splendid pines afford pleasant shade. When Pausanias first saw the ruin, some of the columns were of wood, and probably at one period all the columns of this temple had been of the same material. Here, buried in the clay, was found one of the treasures that rewarded the explorers — the Hermes of Praxiteles, which has been set up in its original place upon the pedestal made for it thousands of years ago.

Gradually one comes to realise the aim and purpose of these grey stones, and how in the days before their

overthrow they were ranged. But our eyes continually travel from the earth where they lie strewn to the deep-blue sky across which the white clouds are travelling. Infinite stillness reigns in this place which was once the scene of so much activity. Spectators in their thousands assembled to witness the games, the summons of heralds filled the air, priests in their ritual finery and judges were there, and young men light of foot hastened towards the stadium. The victor would be carried aloft on the shoulders of the crowd, the palm of his triumph in a hand still a-tremble from the exertion of the contest. He would be escorted to the Prytaneum at the foot of the hill of Cronos, and here regaled. This valley was the one spot where the whole of the Grecian peoples, perennially at war one with another, found unity; where for a few days they became brothers. In this sacred grove dwelt the gods in whose honour the games were held, and to whom all Greeks alike paid worship. The famous Olympic games outlived the glory of Hellas and outlasted the rise and the fall of the Roman empire; hither came the emperors of the Roman world to struggle and to conquer; and it was not till four hundred years after the Christian era had begun that a papal edict put an end to Olympia once and for all.

On the north side of the Altis, the foundations of twelve little treasure-houses can still be traced. They were designed to contain the gifts from the various States. Their remnants look like the foundations of miniature temples. On the walls were placed the statues of the victors in the games, though it was necessary to carry off the palm of victory three times ere this honour

could be granted. Hellas was ever restrained in its enthusiasm. Indeed the whole site is typical of this restraint; 'tis a small place to have become so renowned in song and story! Men lived at a higher pitch of intensity in those days, and their life-drama was played on a smaller stage.

One realises all these things while contemplating the Hermes of Praxiteles. Never has a statue been more happy in its excavators. The coarse-grained Parian marble is of a dull-yellow hue, giving a most lifelike impression of skin and living organs. It would seem that the hand of the artist was loath to cease the work of smoothing and polishing and shaping this beautiful god, who is, nevertheless, so divinely human a creature. The placid self-sufficiency and extreme simplicity of the sculptures on the Parthenon, which make them so unapproachable and so impenetrable, have vanished from this work of Praxiteles. The soft and charming countenance hides, behind a veil of youthful melancholy, the complex soul of a grown man. No longer can we talk of the lack of individuality in the heads of Grecian statues. Intelligence beams forth from the noble brow; the eyes do not see the child which reaches out its hands to seize the grapes: they are gazing away to something which approaches from beyond. The lips are curled in a smile and Hermes seems about to speak.

Maybe the artist had the god's gifts of eloquence and gentle persuasion in mind as he wrought. Or he has perhaps merely depicted an Athenian youth who was a model of spiritual and physical perfection. We, who

stand gazing at the statue, are nevertheless convinced that it is a living god.

A few steps away, we come to a work of a very different period, representing quite other ideals, and yet no less Greek in character. Among the figures of the west pediment of the temple of Zeus stands a huge statue of Apollo. The god is stretching forth his arm to protect the Lapith heroes (or maybe himself) as they grapple with the centaurs. He is naked like the Hermes, but is of harsher mould, narrow of hip, and the hair crowning his serious face is conventionalised in the archaic manner. Bold and restrained, an ascetic youth, splendid and disciplined — we see in him the god of a nation of athletes, of a dominating people; he is a Doric divinity. In the austere epoch when this sculpture was created, the artist was wont to efface himself behind the religious object of his work.

Between the two gods, Nike flies down from her pedestal. She alone, the palm of victory in her hand, is the veritable divinity of Olympia.

Arcadia

Shall I be deemed mad or presumptuous if I pronounce the name of Arcadia while Europe is still groaning from her wounds?

One morning I awoke with a feeling such as men must often have experienced in those ancient days we of a later generation are wrongfully accused of not appreciating. True enough, few were the days that were spent in Arcadian innocence, few the people who gave themselves up to such simple living. Yet it was

open to all who had the will to accept it. But the lively coast must be left behind, the seas and the storms forgotten, adventures and combats under the broad skies must be abandoned; the road to Arcadia lies amid the valleys and fruit trees of the interior, among the hills where the herdsmen dwell. The sanctuary of life, sunny and cheerful, wantoned over by gentle winds, enlivened by sensuous customs, a place where man and beast are friends, where the conceits and follies of the coasts and the seas are unknown or have been put to sleep — this is Arcadia, the land lying in the heart of man. Such, likewise, is the Arcadia which lies in the heart of southern Greece.

Achaea and Elis concentrate their ambition and their industry along the coast; Messenia and Argolis carry on their trade and commerce in the harbours growing up along their littoral, and, like Thessaly and Aetolia and Locris and Attica in the north, thrust greedy fingers into the sea. They profit by foreign experience, and draw renewed strength from argosies bringing new notions from far-off lands. Their inner life is perpetually stirred by the intricacies of modern endeavour. Arcadia is the only province, among the twenty composing this water-girt kingdom, which has no access to the sea. It is shut away by high mountain barriers, an inland plateau divided up by subsidiary spurs with their valleys and gorges.

It is a land of herdsmen and of animals. The men, astride their mules, ride along the unending, silent paths. Morning, noon, and night they may be encountered, watching flocks of peaceful sheep, or

mutinous goats, or little black and white lambs. All the beasts wear bells, which fill the air with music. Meadows clamber up the sides of hills or scurry down the flanks of mountains. Flowers are thick among the grass, and hum with bees. The men wear lambskins girt about them, and the women spin the distaff as they keep watch over the flocks. The Arcadians are kindly and hospitable to the stranger, setting before him all they have of bread, sour milk, eggs, and wine, the harsh wine of the country. They give him a bed when they have such a thing, or a rough shakedown if they have nothing better.

Next day the traveller may journey up a great valley, so narrow that the crests of the mountains seem to close in over his head. The three-horse vehicle in which he sits rolls along incredibly dangerous roads until, after many windings, he reaches a col to find a fresh array of valleys and mountains and passes stretching before him. As if to break the spell of a land wrapped in everlasting dreams, a castle rears its head on a rocky eminence. A knight of Provence once settled here and built the castle of Karytaena, thus founding a Provençal colony in the heart of Arcadia. He was Geoffroy de Villehardouin, but his successor took the name of Geoffroy de Caryténa. Names are murmured denoting this point or that in the quiet landscape; they seem like words inscribed on mellow parchment, and as we emerge into the ravine where the Alpheus goes foaming on its way, the mind swings back to that baffling witchery which all appellations cast upon us and which is specially powerful in the case of Greek names.

Nothing in Arcadia savours of the days of fable, as the sentimentalists of our day would have us believe. Everything is natural and ingenuous. These modern Arcadians are but shepherds immersed in the practical duties of everyday life, recking naught of the halo of romance with which tradition endows their land.

As we drive along, we pass little patches of cultivated land sown with corn. Now, in February, the shoots are high, and the ripe ears will be harvested in May. Walled enclosures denote the places where the husbandman threshes his corn with the aid of a horse which goes round and round harnessed to the beaters. Or men with flails will beat the maize, as in days of old the oats were beaten on our own farms. Each man labours for himself alone, there is no community life, and you may travel a whole day among the mountains without seeing more than three villages.

Not far from Megalopolis we came to one such isolated village, Andritsaena by name. Here we were hospitably entertained till morning, when we had planned to visit the temple, "the columns" as they are locally termed. These venerable columns are the remains of the Apollo temple of Bassae.

In the histories of Greek architecture, it is usually referred to as the temple of the Phigaleians, who are supposed to have erected it in emulation of the Parthenon, which had just been finished. The metopes were bought by the British Government, and form one of the chief treasures of the British Museum. But the remainder of the temple could not be spirited away, and

that stands as of old, forming a strange and unexpected picture amid these wild mountain solitudes. The way to the temple is arduous. The pilgrim toils over passes and up valleys to fresh passes and narrow paths, scrambles up fatiguing slopes covered with loose stones and gravel, to a height close upon four thousand feet above the sea-level, where the ancients of Phigalia elected to build their fane far from the haunts of men. The mountains are wooded and covered with myrtle, ilex, and laurel trees. The mules are left behind, and we reach the summit of the pass on foot. As we clamber over the crest, a wonderful panorama opens out before us, and we see Apollo's shrine amid solitary oaks and scattered boulders, in a clearing which no human foot now treads save that of the herdsman. The builders of the temple chose a spot whence the deity could see the glitter of the Ionian Sea shining far away to the south in the rays of the morning sun.

A certain severity of aspect characterises the site, and also the temple itself, which is built of a hard grey limestone, quarried from the neighbouring hills. Was the temple dedicated to a woodland god? Nearly all the columns are still standing as they were placed in the days of Ictinus, their builder, for the fame of the Parthenon and its architect had spread all over Greece, and the Phigaleians wished their temple to be erected by the self-same hands in the solitude of these upland wilds. Only the marble roof and three columns at the southern corner are wanting, and they would still be intact had they not been destroyed by an earthquake.

For into this remote corner, visited only by herdsmen

and their flocks, no warriors or robbers have ever penetrated, no one came to plunder the gifts of the temple or to lay siege to its walls, as was Athens' unhappy fate. Only in the interior of Sicily, at Segesta, have I seen a similar work, akin to this though greatly differing, and belonging to about the same period of time.

Amid such woods, in the vicinity of such peaceful spots, if one encounters a fellow-mortal, he is mild and gentle as a beast from the Garden of Eden. The Arcadian shepherd does not approach the stranger with a hostile feeling in his heart, nor as one from whom the utmost farthing must be extracted. He is aware that out there, beyond his mountains, about the coasts and the seas, war is being waged; but these things make no impression on the even tenor of his thoughts. Yet we must not imagine that he is insensible to the great events of life. Indeed he is ever on the watch for really important happenings. He knows the course of the seasons and the path of the sun and stars; he can tell the time when grass is to be mown and the harvest gathered in. He loves the tangible and visible world around him. The sea is far away, he has never been to the coast.

Only when he is pasturing his flocks amid the columns of the roofless temple, can he catch a glimpse of the sea and watch it glitter in the sun. At such times he will muse: "So that is what it's like away from home." Shut in by the mountains, as were his fathers before him, he is simple-hearted, shy, and wealthier than any king; he lives a long and uncomplicated and wholesome

life in Arcadia, untroubled by the rough intrusions of war.

Shall I be deemed mad or presumptuous if I pronounce the name of Arcadia while Europe is still groaning from her wounds?

BACK TO VENICE

BACK TO VENICE

Sea-green and silvery, something shimmers before my gaze; now it is far away; now it is closer. I smile as though I were nearing home. I am not wont to be the first on deck, thus early in the morning, before dawn. What has lured me from my bunk? Spring has come again, the same season as when I first set eyes on this town of many waters and many stones, and fell beneath its spell. Once, yes once, among the times I have drawn near to these islands, some one was waiting on the quay to welcome me. To-day, Venice is just a town and nothing more. The city has no thoughts to waste on me; she is only now slowly waking from her slumbers, and it is she who is sending forth the green and silvery beam of welcome, not to me, but to the many vessels hastening towards her.

Towns and rivers, pictures and columns, free-spirited women and intrepid men — all that makes life richer and causes the soul to expand — should be encountered a second time. Just as at the play the unexpected is liable to alienate our sympathies, so are chance encounters apt to alarm us. At such times the soul, instead of expanding, is prone to draw back into itself. Only the dull-witted, stuffed with expectations by the reading of a handbook or by listening to the patter of a guide, will voice his raptures at the first glimpse. Things like Venice can never be seen too late and can never be

contemplated too often, if we are to realise their enchantment to the full.

Occupied with many thoughts, I fail to notice how quickly our boat is making for the inner harbour, how speedily she is drawing near to the islands. Through the mist, the outline of a tall campanile can be traced; now there are two; soon, five. Then cupolas emerge from the morning vapours. Coyly, as if embarrassed by the recollection of its Eastern origin, the small, dark cupolas of San Marco creep forth from the haze. How quickly we glide onward; what would I not give to arrest our progress! To hold back in order to increase the feeling of suspense, to prolong the moments of delight, to draw out the anticipatory enjoyment into infinitude — that would be the highest art, would make life itself a work of art indeed!

The dream fortress, built of rosy marble, rises clearly before me. I seem to be in a land of faëry. Is that really the façade of some specific palace, lived in by some specific magnate, Dandolo or Mocenigo by name, who governed the city, pronounced judgments, hurled the guilty into dungeons beneath the Leads? What were the feelings of ambassadors from far-off realms as they mounted the steps after alighting from their galleys, and saw the paladins of this truly regal republic waiting to receive them, clad in robes of red and of glittering gold? They would pass by long galleries, two granite columns (each crowned with a bronze figure, the one, the winged lion of St. Mark, the other the statue of a knight), and would reach the massive portals of the stronghold in

whose echoing halls the representatives of the proudest city in the world were ready to welcome them. . . .

Everything that happens in these strange little islands smacks of unreality, and thus it is that I find my way into the resplendent hall without knowing how. There, to my left, is the Ariadne of Tintoretto. Again it is borne in upon me that the centenarian master of the Venetian school never achieved anything finer than this work of one of his pupils. Certain is it that Venice possesses no picture by Titian that is equal to the Ariadne of Tintoretto. Is she still sad? Or is that a smile upon her lips? Is she still mourning Perseus, who deserted her, or is she already the bride of the boy-god who with bewitching modesty has wooed the favours of a mortal? Thus does the sea woo the lagoon, when in reality it might demand whatever boon it willed!

How delightful to wander among things familiar! They hail you from every corner, and you greet them all as transfigured spirits or as living creatures. Without, on the Piazza, there is a stir, and the banners flown in honour of Sunday stream in the sea-breeze which blows across the festal hall. Here, where the sounds of this city of calls are at their loudest, where the crowd of to-day is a reflexion of the crowds of long ago, we realise how full of vitality is this ancient town. We have no occasion to take umbrage at the modern dress of those who throng the great square. None of fashion's master-artists could have devised a more becoming garment than the long black shawl which lends uniformity to the

aspect of the women of Venice, as a funereal black lends uniformity to its gondolas. The choice was a stroke of genius. For black must necessarily be the fundamental colour of the clothing of those who live in a place set among waters, seaweed, and mussel-shells, among canals and bays and sea-tangle — in a city that is rainbow-hued, glassy, marmoreal.

Laughter is in the air, for it is Sunday, and the girls sit on old-fashioned sofas chez Florian sipping iced drinks through straws, paying scant attention to the avowals of their swains. Since there are no godlike youths among the suitors, why should we grumble at finding no maid among the bevy of girls to compare with Ariadne? Besides, God alone is in a position to know how beautifully they are shaped beneath their black shawls!

"Gondola, gondola, Signore!"

We glide along the canals and waterways, silently, except for the deep-toned shout of the gondolier when he is about to turn a corner. Suddenly the equestrian statue of Colleoni rears its huge mass of grey and black and green from the flagstones of the Piazza, perhaps the noblest equestrian statue in the world. The easy pose of the great Venetian general, his bronze fist, his strongly-marked features, the metallic glint of his eyes, his perfect security and ease in the saddle, make us realise that this town which appears so womanly in its beauty is founded upon virile strength and endurance.

The magic palaces are built upon piles which the mildew devours, and only by chance does a retiring wavelet allow us to perceive the heads of the devoted

caryatids who are responsible for the security of these dwellings. The props of the palaces are greened over with moss where they are exposed to the air and can catch a glimpse of the cheerful life they support.

It is difficult to decide whether the gulls or the pigeons have the easier and happier existence. The former swoop over the land from the sea, the latter fly towards the margin of the sea from the landward side. When a great white gull loses its way among a flock of grey-blue pigeons, the ten thousand land-birds close their ranks, highly affronted by the intrusion of a stranger from the sea.

The noon-day gun is fired. There is a commotion. Other ghosts rise to speak. One of the giants in the clock-tower raises his hammer and strikes the hour, the second giant chimes in, and the faithful stream forth from the mosque which they have ventured to call a cathedral. From the golden realm of the angels and the prophets and the saints, and followed by the golden music of the great organ, the worshippers emerge through the arched doorways of the Byzantine fane. At first their eyes are dazzled by the sunshine flooding the Piazza; then, making for the shade of the colonnades in a bustle of women and beggars, amid a whirr of wings and flags, guarded by giants, the thousand worshippers, hearts tranquillised by their devotions, disappear.

I have climbed the tower. The water-girt islands lie at my feet. They seem to float in the silvery shimmer of the midday heat. Over there is Murano, the isle of

fire and sand — the fire and sand whose secret powers are cooled by water, and whose mysterious forms are shaped by young glass-blowers. It is the isle of dreams in tinted glass. Art, here, is paid for with the lungs of human beings who stand upon the wooden platforms year by year in order to create objects which serve no useful purpose, however beautiful they may be. Farther away to the north-east is Burano, where in the open courts of the convent hundreds of holy maidens sit making lace for worldly-minded princesses whose wedding garments are adorned with the labour of many hands, whose marriages have been arranged in the interests of diplomacy, whose offspring are not their "children" but "heirs to the throne."

Southward, poised on a tiny islet, lies a dark, fortlike building — a madhouse. From the barred windows, the eyes of the inmates peer forth across the lagoon, persons no madder than we are, but whose madness takes another form. The poor things are locked away from life, and must often dream of the Sundays they spent in joyous laughter on the Piazza, walking up and down with some charming silk-begowned lass whom they treated to iced drinks at Florian's. Their thoughts strain citywards; not one of them has any concern for that other island which lies farther south in the lagoon, behind their own San Servolo.

That other island is San Lazzaro, where the Armenian order of Mechitaristo has its monastery. The grey-beard monks spend their days in prayer and in the cultivation of their garden. Their tutelary deity — the saint in whose honour foreigners undertake the

pilgrimage to the island — was one possessed, much as those men over yonder are possessed; he was nothing but a mad poet. Week after week Lord Byron sat from morning till night engrossed in the study of Armenia, busied in ancient tomes, until he had in some sort opened a way leading to a knowledge of the secrets of Asia. When the sun was dipping towards the west, the poet would rise up and call for his gondola. But instead of stepping into it, he would suddenly strip and, ordering the boat to precede him, would set out to swim over to the Piazzetta. It was carnival time, and all Venice was dancing.

My heart has grown heavy as I gaze at this and at that, dreaming and musing. . . . Must I really leave the Adriatic? How blue the stretch of slumbering water looks from this vantage-point! Must I, indeed, quit the shores of the Midland Sea? You bays and islands, you palms and boats, you many fishes I have seen beneath the surface of the waters, you cats creeping stealthily about the decks of ships, you echoing steps of people crossing bridges, you scent of seaweed, you medley of mariner's tackle, you tang of salt in the air, you winds, you people of the many races that frequent these coasts, you stones and shellfish and music, you women with your almond-shaped eyes, you rainbow-tinted world of heavens and of dreams — must I bid you all farewell?

As I turn to leave the tower, I see the red-gold sail of a fishing-smack from Chioggia disappearing into the midday haze. It scuds along, past the corner of the Sea

Custom House. On a level with my outlook tower, rising from the roof of the Custom House, is a bronze goddess with outstretched pinions. Standing on the world, a gilded globe upborne by two Atlases, Fortuna acts as weather-vane, turning this way and that according as the wind may veer.

Is she not the dispenser of happiness, this naked beauty who turns now towards one quarter and now towards another as the breeze of fate may blow? Even the gods are subject to her caprices; and Dame Fortune herself is but the sport of the winds, her only freedom being the freedom to spin haphazard on top of the world sustained by two fettered giants.

END